Arnold's Practical Sabbath School Lesson Commentary 1915



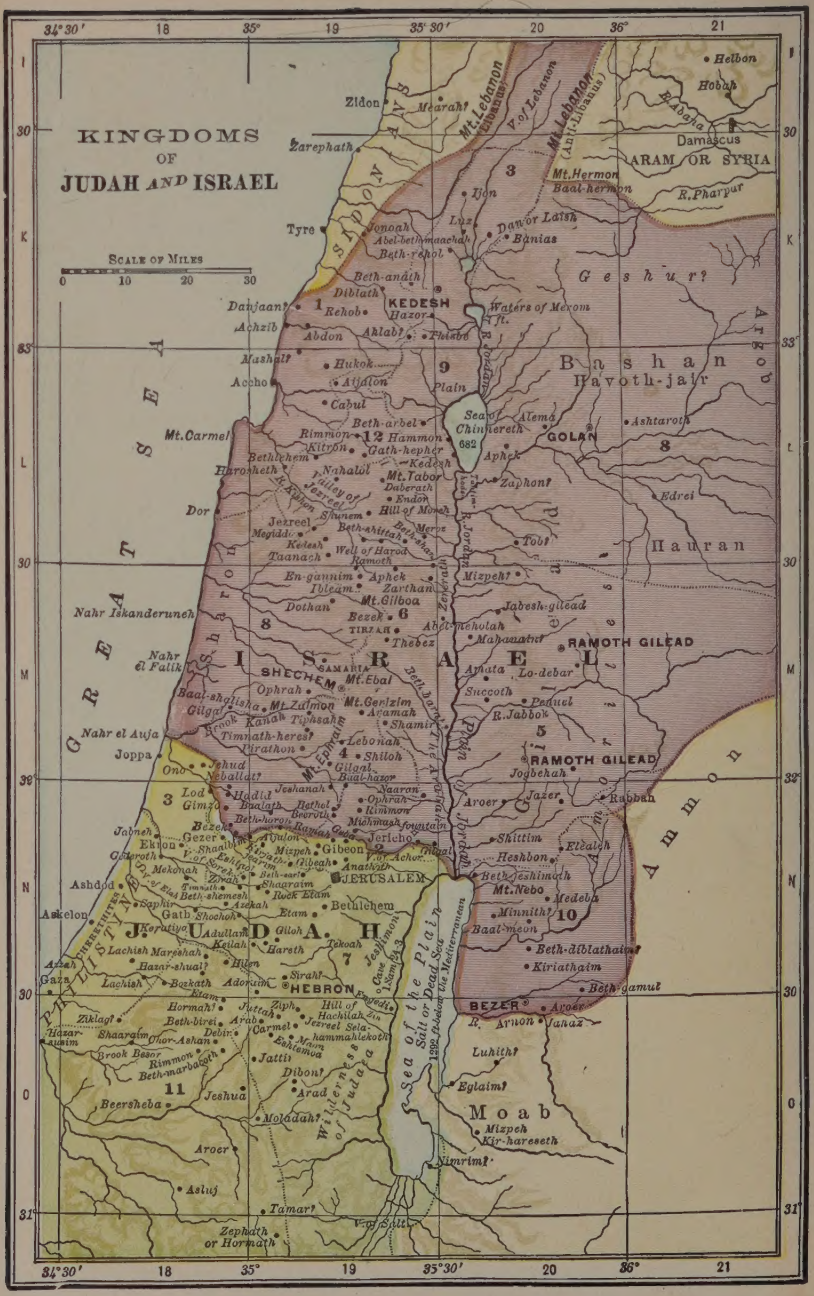
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KINGDOMS
OF
JUDAH AND ISRAEL
SCALE OF MILES
0 10 20 30
PHILISTINES
PLAIN OF SHARON
GREAT SEA
Zidon
Mearah
Zarephath
Tyre
Mt. Lebanon
Mt. Lebanon (Anti-Libanus)
Helbon
Hobah
R. Abana
Damascus
ARAM OR SYRIA
Mt. Hermon
Baal-hermon
R. Pharpar
Ijon
Dan or Laish
Banias
Jonoah
Abel-beth-maachah
Beth-rehob
Geshur?
Beth-anath
Diblath
KEDESH
Hazor
Waters of Merom
R.
Rehob
Daberath
Achzib
Abdon
Ahlab
Thabor
Bashan
Havoth-jair
Mashal
Hukok
Accho
Aijalon
Plain
Cabul
Beth-arbel
Rimmon
Hammon
Kitron
Gath-hepher
Sea of Chinnereth
Alemeth
GOLAN
Ashtaroth
Mt. Carmel
Bethlehem
Haroseth
Nahaloi
Kedesh
Aphek
Zaphon?
Mt. Tabor
Daberath
Endor
Hill of Moreh
Dor
Jezreel
Megiddo
Shunem
Beth-shittah
Merom
Edrei
Tobi
Hauran
Kedesh
Well of Harod
Taanach
Ramoth
En-gannim
Aphek
Mizpeh?
Ibleam
Zarthan
Mt. Gilboa
Jabesh-gilead
Nahr Iskanderuneh
Dothan
Bezek
TIRZAH
Ahilud
Mahanaim
Thebez
RAMOTH GILEAD
Nahr el Falik
ISRAEL
SAMARIA
SHECHEM
Mt. Ebal
Aphaia
Lo-debar
Succoth
Penuel
Baal-shalisha
Ophrah
Mt. Zalmon
Mt. Gerizim
Aramah
R. Jabbok
Gilgal
Shamir
Nahr el Auja
Timnath-heres
Kanah
Tiphsah
Lebonah
Joppa
Pirathon
Shiloh
Gilgal
Jogbehah
Ono
Jehud
Beballat?
Jabneel
Lod
Haddid
Jeshanah
Naaran
Aroer
Jazer
Rabbah
Gimzo
Baalath
Ophrah
Rimmon
Beth-horon
Beeroth
Bethel
Michmash
Fountain
Jabneh
Bezek
Gezer
Ekron
Ajalon
Gibeon
Jericho
Shittim
Elealeh
Heshbon
Mekonah
Timnath
Beth-shemesh
Rock Etam
Anathoth
Mt. Nebo
Medeba
Ashdod
Shaaraim
JERUSALEM
Minnith
Askelon
Gath
Socho
Azekah
Etam
Bethulehem
Baal-meon
JUDAH
Adullam
Gilo
Tekoah
Beth-diblathaim
Kiriathaim
Azzah
Gaza
Lachish
Moresheth
Hazor-shual
Hebron
Beth-gamul
Bozkath
Adoraim
Ziklag
Hormah
Ziph
Hachilah
Bezer
Aroer
Arad
Jattir
Debir
Jeshua
Beersheba
Moladah
Aroer
Asiuj
Tamar
Zephath or Hormath
Sea of the Plain
Salt or Dead Sea
1292 ft. below the Mediterranean
Jordan
Luhith?
Eglaim?
Moab
Mizpeh
Kir-hareseth
Jimrim?
AMMON

Arnold's Practical

Sabbath School Commentary

ON THE

International Lessons

1915

A PRACTICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE COMMENTARY, WITH HINTS TO TEACHERS, ILLUSTRATIONS, BLACKBOARD EXERCISES, QUESTIONS AND MAPS

EDITOR:
REV. DAVID S. WARNER, A. M.

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35°
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37°
38°
CYPRUS
GREAT SEA
R. Orontes
Hamath
ARAM
OR
SYRIA
Emesa
Arvad (Ruad)
Kadesh of the Hittites
GREAT
DESERT
Riblah
Tadmor (Palmyra)
Gebal (Babylos)
Baalbek (Heliopolis)
Perothah
Mt. Lebanon
Sidon
Damascus
Mt. Hermon
Abel-Beth-Maachah
Dan
Tyre
Kedesh
Sea of Chinnereth
Kenath
Mt. Carmel
Jezreel
Salcah
Tirzah
Jabesh-gilead
Bozrah
ISRAEL
Shechem
Shalem
Joppa
Shiloh
Gezer
Bethel
Gibeon
Rabbath-ammon
Ekron
Jerusalem
Askelon
Gath
Bethlehem
Gaza
Hebron
JUDAH
Rabbath-moab
Kir
Beersheba
MOAB
Tophel
DESERT OF PARAN
Mt. Hor
Selah
EDOM
Ezion Geber
Elath
Hazeroth
MIDIAN
Gulf of Akaba
THE DOMINIONS OF
DAVID AND SOLOMON
GLOBE E. & E. CO., CHI.

PREFACE

Two years ago we were studying the story of the beginnings of things as told in the Pentateuch, and through the year the history of God's chosen people was considered down to the time of Joshua and the location of the tribes of Israel in Canaan. This year we resume the study of Bible history in the time of the judges and continue it to the time of the captivity of the kingdom of Israel. In our study we consider the lives of some of the noblest men and women of all time. We note the circumstances that demanded characters of strength and action and such as could declare God's will and nature, and could leave to the world examples of piety, faith, courage and spiritual power.

We can not fail to be impressed with the authority of God's word. The more we study it, the more deeply conscious are we that God is speaking to us through that word. The stories of the deliverances brought to those who trusted God fully give inspiration to us to-day to trust and obey him implicitly. The scriptures have in them a power possessed by no other literature. They are at once sublime and simple, severe and tender, dealing with temporal things and things spiritual, appealing to the intellect and to the heart, human and divine. They invite us to accept them and rest confidently upon them. They furnish us rules of conduct and principles bearing upon character. They point to the successful life, the holy life, the Spirit-filled life. They offer us the best for the present life, as well as for the life that is to come. They present to us warnings against disobedience and unbelief. They show us that we must be on our guard lest we be overcome by the wicked one. The strongest and best, as well as the weak, are liable to fall into sin unless there is a constancy of faith and watchfulness. In God's word we can find comfort and counsel for all occasions in life.

The Bible is a fresh and inspiring book. We may have read its pages a thousand times, and still its truths are sparkling and powerful. We may commit paragraphs and chapters to memory and repeat them over and over again, but they never lose their charm. The word of God has found its way into hearts that were spiritually dark, and has so taken hold of them that they have become savingly acquainted with him who gave the word. Anything that we may say in attempting to express the excellency of the word of God is weak; God's word itself is its highest recommendation.

We have sought the blessing of the Lord upon our efforts in the preparation of this book, and trust he has graciously assisted all who have contributed to it. Rev. Edwin C. Best has furnished the Blackboard Exercises. The Practical Applications have been written by Rev. George W. Griffith. We are indebted to Mrs. Tressa R. Arnold for the Practical Survey. The comments on the scripture portions forming the lessons, the Teaching Plan and the Hints to Primary Teachers are the work of the editor.

We trust this book will commend itself to the large family of Sunday-school workers throughout the world who make use of it. We send it forth in the name of the Master, "whose we are and whom we serve."

DAVID S. WARNER.

Chicago, Illinois.

THE LESSONS

The Old Testament: Judges to Second Kings, with Prophets

FIRST QUARTER

I.	January	3.—God's Patience with Israel - - - - - - - - - Judges 2:7-19
II.	"	10.—Deborah and Barak Deliver Israel - Judges 4:4-23; 5:1-22. Print 4:4-16
III.	"	17.—The Call of Gideon - - - Judges 6:11-40. Print 6:11-16, 33-40
IV.	"	24.—Gideon and the Three Hundred - Judges 7:1-25. Print 7:1-7, 16-23
V.	"	31.—The Birth of Samson—Temperance Lesson - - Judges 13:8-16, 24, 25
VI.	February	7.—Ruth Chooses the True God - - - - Ruth 1:1-22. Print 1:6-18
VII.	"	14.—Samuel Called to Be a Prophet 1 Samuel 1:24-28; 3:1-21. Print 3:1-13, 19, 20
VIII.	"	21.—The Death of Eli and His Sons - - 1 Samuel 4:1-18. Print 4:1-13, 18
IX.	"	28.—Samuel, the Victorious Leader - - - - - - 1 Samuel 7:3-17
X.	March	7.—Saul Anointed King - - - - 1 Samuel 8:1-10:27. Print 9:17 10:1
XI.	"	14.—Saul Gains His Kingdom - - - - - - - 1 Samuel 11:1-15
XII.	"	21.—Jonathan and His Armorbearer - - - 1 Samuel 14:1-46. Print 14:1-13
XIII.	"	28.—Review

SECOND QUARTER

I.	April	4.—The Resurrection—Easter Lesson - - - - - Matthew 28:1-10
II.	"	11.—David Anointed King - - - - - 1 Samuel 16:1-23. Print 16:4-13
III.	"	18.—The Shepherd Psalm - - - - - - - - - - Psalm 23:1-6
IV.	"	25.—David and Goliath - - - - - - 1 Samuel 17:1-54. Print 17:38-51
V.	May	2.—Saul Tries to Kill David - - - - 1 Samuel 19:1-24. Print 19:1-12
VI.	"	9.—Friendship of David and Jonathan - 1 Samuel 20:1-42. Print 20:32-42
VII.	"	16.—David Spares Saul - - - - - 1 Samuel 26:1-25. Print 26:5-16
VIII.	"	23.—David King over Judah and Israel - - - 2 Samuel 2:1-7; 5:1-5
IX.	"	30.—David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem 2 Samuel 6:1-19; Psalm 24:1-10. Print 2 Samuel 6:12-15; Psalm 24:1-10
X.	June	6.—Nathan Rebukes David - - 2 Samuel 11:1-12:7. Print 11:22-12:7
XI.	"	13.—The Blessedness of Forgiveness - - - - - Psalm 32:1-11
XII.	"	20.—A Prayer for the Tempted—Temperance Lesson - - Psalm 141:1-10
XIII.	"	27.—Review

THIRD QUARTER

I.	July	4.—Absalom's Failure - - - - - - - - - - 2 Samuel 18:1-15
II.	"	11.—Solomon Anointed King - - - - 1 Kings 1:1-2:12. Print 1:28-40
III.	"	18.—Solomon Chooses Wisdom - - - - - - - - 1 Kings 3:4-15
IV.	"	25.—Solomon Dedicates the Temple - - 1 Kings 8:1-53. Print 8:22-30
V.	August	1.—The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon - - - 1 Kings 10:1-10, 13
VI.	"	8.—The Kingdom Torn Asunder - - - 1 Kings 12:1-24. Print 12:6-16
VII.	"	15.—Jeroboam Leads Israel into Sin - - - - - - 1 Kings 12:25-33
VIII.	"	22.—Asa's Good Reign - - - - - - - - 2 Chronicles 15:1-15
IX.	"	29.—God's Care of Elijah - - - - - - - - - 1 Kings 17:1-16
X.	September	5.—Elijah and the Prophets of Baal - 1 Kings 18:16-40. Print 18:30-39
XI.	"	12.—Elijah's Flight and Return - - - 1 Kings 19:1-21. Print 19:8-18
XII.	"	19.—Defeat through Drunkenness—Temperance Lesson 1 Kings 20:1-21. Print 20:10-21
XIII.	"	26.—Review

FOURTH QUARTER

I.	October	3.—Elijah in Naboth's Vineyard - - 1 Kings 21:1-29. Print 21:11-20
II.	"	10.—Elijah Taken up into Heaven - - - - - - - - 2 Kings 2:1-12
III.	"	17.—Elisha Heals Naaman the Syrian - 2 Kings 5:1-27. Print 5:1-10, 14
IV.	"	24.—Elisha's Heavenly Defenders - - - 2 Kings 6:8-23. Print 6:8-17
V.	"	31.—The Boy Joash Crowned King - 2 Kings 11:1-20. Print 11:4-12
VI.	November	7.—Joash Repairs the Temple - - 2 Kings 11:21-12:16. Print 12:4-15
VII.	"	14.—Daniel in the King's Court—World's Temperance Sunday Daniel 1:1-21. Print 1:8-16, 19, 20
VIII.	"	21.—Jonah a Missionary to Nineveh—Foreign Missionary Lesson Jonah 3:1-4:11. Print 3:1-10
IX.	"	28.—Amos the Fearless Prophet—Home Missionary Lesson - Amos 5:1-15
X.	December	5.—Uzziah's Pride and Punishment - 2 Chronicles 26:1-23. Print 26:8-10, 15-21
XI.	"	12.—Jehovah Yearns over Backsliding Israel - - - - Hosea 11:1-11
XII.	"	19.—The Song of the Angels—Christmas Lesson - Luke 2:1-20. Print 2:8-20
XIII.	"	26.—Review

EDITORIAL

The Daily Home Readings

There is no possibility of placing too great stress upon the value of scripture passages in explaining scripture. When one text is compared with other portions of the Bible bearing upon that text, much added light is received. It is not reasonable, nor is it right, to take one passage by itself and base a principle or creed upon it. A text must be considered as it stands with the context, and also in connection with the other portions of scripture which relate to the same subject. It is of material help to read the passages cited in the margins of reference Bibles. There is also great advantage in using a scripture concordance and a subject index to the Bible, in order to find passages that explain or illustrate the subject under consideration. In recognition of the fact that scripture is explained by scripture the International Sunday-school Lesson Committee has prepared Daily Home Bible Readings upon the Sunday-school lessons for succeeding years. These selections are carefully made and throw valuable light upon the scripture portions which constitute the lessons week after week. The system of reading a passage each day which bears upon the Sunday-school lesson for the following Sabbath serves to keep the lesson prominent during the entire week. The teacher and the pupil have something to think about, and serviceable suggestions will occur to the mind of him who thus gives attention to the lesson. It is impossible to group all passages bearing upon the lesson in the Daily Home Readings, and there is still ample room for original investigation. These readings should be used not merely for the light they throw upon the subject in hand, but also for the spiritual benefit which may be derived from them. It is possible to become familiar with the great truths of the scriptures, even the promises and the warnings, without receiving much spiritual benefit, hence we should make their study serve our soul's interests. The miner may work all day among nuggets of gold and not be enriched because he is working for others to whom the products of his labors belong; but we have the right to appropriate to our personal benefit the nuggets of truth we discover and then pass them on to others that they also may be blessed, and we shall be gainers by the giving.

The Material and the Spiritual

In the maintenance of the Sunday-school many interests are involved. Some of these are largely material or secular in character. We are under the necessity of providing rooms for the sessions of the school, and we are in duty bound to secure the most suitable accommodations possible for this purpose. This phase of the Sunday-school interests is too often overlooked. The primary department should have a room of its own, even in a small school. Where this is not possible, a substitute can be provided by using a folding screen to partition off a corner for use during the lesson hour. In this connection may be mentioned the equipment for Sunday-school work, such as blackboards, maps and charts. There is always at hand the question of finances, and this question is liable to become troublesome and demand too much attention. Yet the expenses of the school must be met, and there must be a training of the school in giving for home and foreign missions. The question of securing efficient teachers and of appointing them to their proper places is a live one and demands careful attention. The problem of bringing in new scholars is large. It is not a small thing to secure regularity in attendance and to retain scholars once brought in. The tendency to have the attention turned largely to the secular side of the Sunday-school is to be restrained. Not that the business end should be neglected, but there must be proper attention to the spiritual interests. It is more important that the officers and teachers should be alive spiritually and should look after the highest welfare of the scholars, than that the school should be large or the equipment perfect. It is a great accomplishment to keep a class of boys or girls interested in the lessons from week to week and from month to month, but it is a greater thing and more important to reach their hearts and make them feel their responsibility to God. To make the school spiritual there must be a persistency in prayer on the part of teachers and officers. Teachers who are indifferent or without spiritual life are

in a poor condition to contribute toward making the atmosphere of the school spiritual. Nothing can take the place of vital religion in those upon whom rest the great interests of the school.

The World-wide Vision

To those who attended the World's Sunday-school Convention at Zurich, Switzerland, there came a vision of what concerted, consecrated, persistent effort for the spread of the gospel would mean to the millions who are now in darkness. Christian workers represented the condition of their respective fields. The cry came up from many a land for earnest, devoted workers to help to establish Sunday-schools there. In non-Christian lands the hope of Christianity is largely in the children, and they are to be reached through the schools which the missionaries sustain. These schools are in a large sense Bible schools, for whether they are day-schools or Sunday-schools, the scriptures are taught to the children, who are influenced toward Christianity and many of them become thoroughly converted. In some of the Mohammedan lands the persecution of those who become Christians is exceedingly bitter, and it would be much more bitter than it is if the laws of the country did not interfere. In spite of opposition, the work of spreading the gospel is increasing. It is encouraging to note that Count Okuma, the premier of Japan, is greatly interested in the Sunday-school, and is enthusiastic over the prospect of what the World's Convention, to be held in Tokyo in 1916, will do for Japan. In 1913 the son of the governor of Kagoshima, Japan, came under the influence of Christianity and was converted. Not long afterward he was taken sick and died. He died a Christian, leaving a testimony to Christ's saving power, witnessing that he had perfect rest of soul. Kiukiang, China, is a city of eighty-two thousand inhabitants, and the center of a population of five million. There was but one missionary there for nine years, but she labored so earnestly and successfully that she has a Bible women's training-school which is turning out Sunday-school teachers. There are many day-schools, all of which are also Sunday-schools. Over two thousand boys and girls attend these schools. A remarkable feature of this work is that the city authorities have been so favorably impressed with the work this missionary is doing that they have thrown open the Confucian and Buddhist temples without charge for her use for holding Sunday-schools. Facts concerning the needs in heathen lands, stories of the labors and hardships of missionaries and our responsibility to the heathen should be set before our Sunday-school scholars so as to make them feel that they must do something for those who are in heathen darkness.

The Whole Bible

It would be deplorable indeed if any of the millions of children whom we teach in our Sunday-schools should get the idea that the Bible is only a leaf of paper or a few leaves in the shape of a lesson quarterly. Yet, unless a special effort is made to instruct the children, what is to hinder them from getting such an idea? The little ones are given picture cards or leaflets and are told that they contain Bible stories. As they pass from one class to another, they receive lesson helps of corresponding grades, and they are still studying the Bible. The teacher who realizes the true nature of his calling will have the Bible in his class and will not fail to inform the children that it is the Bible, and what they have in their quarterlies is only a small portion of the Bible, arranged so as to form a lesson or a series of lessons. It is essential that the teacher shall have the disposition and ability to give his class a general knowledge of the Bible. It is a very reasonable and helpful practise to have a Bible in the hands of every member of the Sunday-school. As soon as a child becomes able to read with ease, training in the general subject-matter of the scriptures should begin. Attention should be called to the two great divisions of the Bible. The names of the books should be memorized, as thoroughly as is the multiplication table. In some classes or schools the scholars are trained to repeat the names of the books both forward and backward. It is interesting and profitable to drill children in finding passages in the Bible quickly. It is not right to allow children to grow up with a vague idea of the contents of the

Bible. We have seen young people turn to the list of books in the front of Bibles to find out whether a certain book was in the Old Testament or in the New, and where it was located. It takes all the books in the scriptures to make the whole Bible and we should have a general knowledge of the nature of each book. Every young person should commence to read the Bible through by course, and continue to read it through year by year.

No Graduation from the Sunday-school

We have graduation days and graduation days, in our grammar-schools, high schools and colleges, when students leave these institutions, having finished their courses, never to return again as students. In the Sunday-school the case is vastly different. Here we have promotion days and days that may be called graduation days from one department into another, but no graduation day from the Sunday-school. A most interesting peculiarity of this institution is that there is but one book to study, the Bible, and that book contains matter of an amount and quality to engage the lifelong attention of every man and woman. The scriptures contain truths so simple that the child can grasp them, yet the adult receives them with profit. The stories of the Bible are told over and over again to children and they do not become dry or wearisome. The same stories form the groundwork and embellishment of many a finished and profound discourse. The Bible is a storehouse of truth and illustration to which one may come and find what he needs to comfort himself and others and to give potency to his utterances. The Bible is a mine of truth in which one may work during his lifetime, constantly finding treasure, and yet never exhausting the mine. One may say that he has completed the study of arithmetic or has mastered it, but he can not say that he has mastered the Bible. Its depths are so great that one can not fathom them all. The Sunday-school is a place for young and old. It is a refreshing sight to see an entire family in Sunday-school. The parents may be there as teachers or in adult classes and the children in their respective departments. This institution is of such a nature that old and young feel perfectly at home in it. It is interesting to hear the testimonies of those who have spent long lives in the Sunday-school. Many commenced going so early in life that they do not remember the beginning of their attendance, and as scholars or teachers or officers they have been in it down to old age. This is as it should be.

The Greatest Teacher

When we think of successful teaching of spiritual truth and seek to know what elements are essential to proficiency, we almost instinctively refer to Jesus, who taught more effectively than any human instructor. No one can hope to equal him as a teacher, but he should become to every one of us an example, whose manner and spirit we are to imitate. What we are as teachers counts for more than what we know. What Jesus was constituted a powerful factor in his ministry of making known the truth. He was sinless. He had never sinned. He never experienced the pangs of an injured or violated conscience. He never stooped to do a thing merely for his own advantage. He had an intensity of interest in those whom he taught, that we can by no possibility possess. He saw the people's need and felt for them. He understood the opposition that was arrayed against him and the truths he came to utter. He knew the depths of the hearts of humanity. He knew the nature of the truths that were essential to recover sinners in Judaism and outside of it, and bring them into discipleship with him. He knew how to gain the attention of those who should hear him. His discourses were not stilted and dogmatic. He never shot over the heads of his hearers. He never soared away in his teachings beyond the reach of those whom he would instruct. He never, on the other hand, indulged in trifles to amuse and entertain his auditors. He always went by a direct course to the heart of his subject to reach the hearts of his hearers. He did not hesitate to use common incidents to impress the truth. His parables appealed to those to whom they were spoken. He was full of tenderness when the occasion called for tenderness, and he spoke with point and severity when such utterances were necessary. "Never

man spake like this man," was the acknowledgment of the soldiers.

Instructed or Converted

Increasing attention is being given to the subject of religious education. It has come to be a widely acknowledged fact that children and youth need to be taught the great truths of religion and morality. The effort to exclude the Bible from the public schools is meeting with strong opposition. Many states and countries permit the reading of the scriptures in the schools. The Bible is acknowledged to be the great text-book on religion and morals, and the reading of it in the public schools of any land will make an impression for good upon those who hear it. The church in its various departments, including the Sunday-school, is the great agency in dispensing religious instruction. We make special reference to the Sunday-school, yet we do not overlook the work the church is doing directly in its public and social services nor that which is being done by the home. The home is a powerful agency in making deep religious impressions if the parents take a proper interest in the religious training of their children. As important as it is for the child to receive religious instruction, it must be borne in mind that this is rather a means to an end, than the end in itself. An acquaintance with God's word is of great value, even from an educational point of view, but in our Sunday-school work we must aim to give this and much more. Instruction is not conversion or salvation. One can not be trained into a state of salvation. It requires the work of the Holy Spirit. The effort of the Sunday-school worker should be to lead the scholar to seek the Lord with all his heart. The need for a new heart must be emphasized. It is a sad fact that many stop short of this important end. They seem to think that they are succeeding as teachers if they secure and retain the attention of the scholars, and lead them to learn Bible history, geography and doctrine. All this is good, but beyond this is the conversion of the soul. No one should feel that his work for a scholar is done until every possible effort has been made to secure the conversion of that scholar, and even then there is the important work of helping that scholar into an experience that is settled, strong and growing, into an experience of the baptism of the Holy Ghost which brings heart purity and equipment for Christian service.

The Home Department

The growth of the Home Department idea has been marvelous, and this can be attributed to the fact that there is a large field for this kind of Christian service. The enemy of souls is constantly engaged in filling the minds of men and women with thoughts and ambitions that exclude the thoughts of God and religion. They are taken up with the things of this life and do not give attention to the welfare of their souls. There are others who are providentially shut away from the house of the Lord and from the Sunday-school, but who have an interest in religion and in God's word. To each of these classes the Home Department comes with helpfulness. The indifferent are in many cases aroused to a realization of their carelessness and are led to study the scriptures and through that exercise to seek the salvation of their souls. The shut-ins are led to take a deeper interest in spiritual things, and have the satisfaction of being associated or identified at least, with those who are active in the public services of the Lord's house. The Home Department furnishes a field of Christian service to those who need some definite work to do for the Lord. Activity is essential to growth in Christian experience. Numberless young people have become converted and have run well for a season, and then have become inactive and spiritually dead. They might have been saved to the work of the Lord, if they had been directed in their activities. This department gives an opportunity to many to visit the homes of its members, to bring comfort and an uplift. The visitors can in many homes obtain the privilege of reading the word of God and praying with the people, thus being blessed themselves while they are being made a blessing to others. This is one way of obeying the injunction, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23).

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

From the Creation to the Birth of Christ

According to Ussher's Chronology

Period	Date	Event	Scripture Reference
	B.C.		
I	4004	The creation	Gen. 1, 2
	4002	Birth of Cain	Gen. 4:1
	4001	Birth of Abel	Gen. 4:2
From the Creation to the Deluge	3875	Death of Abel	Gen. 4:8
	3874	Birth of Seth	Gen. 5:3
	3382	Birth of Enoch	Gen. 5:18
	3317	Birth of Methuselah	Gen. 5:21
	3074	Death of Adam	Gen. 5:5
	3017	Enoch translated	Gen. 5:24
	2948	Birth of Noah	Gen. 5:28, 29
	2348	Death of Methuselah	Gen. 5:27
II	2348	Noah enters the ark	Gen. 7:6, 7
	2347	Noah goes forth from the ark	Gen. 8:18
From the Deluge to the Call of Abraham	2234	Building the tower of Babel	Gen. 11:1-9
	1998	Death of Noah	Gen. 9:29
	1996	Birth of Abraham	Gen. 11:26
III	1936	Removal of Abraham from Ur to Haran	Gen. 11:31
	1921	Abraham called to Canaan	Gen. 12:1-5
From the Call of Abraham to the Exodus	1913	Abraham's rescue of Lot	Gen. 14:1-24
	1910	Birth of Ishmael	Gen. 16
	1897	Renewal of God's covenant with Abraham	Gen. 17, 18
	1897	Destruction of Sodom	Gen. 18, 19
	1896	Birth of Isaac	Gen. 21:1-5
	1871	Abraham's faith tested	Gen. 22:1-19
	1859	Death of Sarah	Gen. 23:1, 2
	1856	Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah	Gen. 24
	1836	Birth of Jacob and Esau	Gen. 25:24-26
	1821	Death of Abraham	Gen. 25:7, 8
	1760	Jacob's flight to Padan-aram	Gen. 28-30
	1746	Birth of Joseph	Gen. 30:22-24
	1729	Joseph sold into Egypt	Gen. 37
	1716	Joseph honored in Egypt	Gen. 41
	1706	Jacob's removal to Egypt	Gen. 43-47
	1689	Jacob's death	Gen. 49
	1636	Joseph's death	Gen. 50:26
	1574	Birth of Aaron	Exod. 6:20
	1571	Birth of Moses	Exod. 2:1-10
	1531	Moses' flight to Midian	Exod. 2:11-22
	1491	Moses commissioned to deliver Israel	Exod. 3, 4
IV	1491	Crossing the Red Sea	Exod. 14, 15
	1491	Giving the law at Sinai	Exod. 19-40
From the Exodus to the Division of the Kingdom	1452	Death of Aaron	Num. 20:27-29
	1451	Death of Moses	Deut. 34
	1451	Joshua, Moses' successor	Deut. 34:9
	1451	Crossing the Jordan	Josh. 1-4
	1443	Death of Joshua	Josh. 24
	1155	Birth of Samuel	1 Sam. 1:20
	1095	Saul anointed king of Israel	1 Sam. 10, 11
	1055	Death of Saul	1 Sam. 31
	1055	David made king of Judah	2 Sam. 2:4
	1048	David made king of all Israel	2 Sam. 5:1-5
	1033	Solomon's birth	2 Sam. 12:24
	1015	Solomon made king	1 Kings 1
	975	Revolt of the ten tribes	1 Kings 12

Period	Date	Kings of Judah	Kings of Israel
V	B. C.		
	975	Rehoboam	Jeroboam
From the Division of the Kingdom to the Captivity of Judah	958	Abijah, or Abijam	
	955	Asa	
	954		Nadab
	953		Baasha
	930		Elah
	929		Zimri
	929		Omri
	918		Ahab
	914	Jehoshaphat	
	897		Ahaziah
	896		Joram, or Jehoram
	892	Joram, or Jehoram	
	885	Ahaziah	
	884	Athaliah	Jehu
	878	Joash, or Jehoash	
	856		Jehoahaz
	839		Jehoash
	839	Amaziah	
	825		Jeroboam II
	810	Uzziah, or Azariah	
	784		Interregnum
	773		Zachariah
	772		Shallum
	772		Menahem
	761		Pekahiah
	759		Pekah
	758	Jotham	
	742	Ahaz	
	730		Hoshea
	726	Hezekiah	
	721		Captivity of Israel
	697	Manasseh	
	642	Amon	
	640	Josiah	
	609	Jehoahaz	
	609	Jehoiakim	
	598	Jehoiachin	
	598	Zedekiah	
	587	Captivity of Judah	

	587	Destruction of Jerusalem	2 Kings 25:8, 9
	538	Capture of Babylon by Cyrus	Dan. 5:31
	536	Cyrus permits Jews to return	Ezra 1:1-4
VI	536	Return under Zerubbabel	Ezra 2:1, 2
	534	Foundation of second temple laid	Ezra 3:8-13
From the Captivity of Judah to End of Old Testament History	521	Building of temple stopped	Ezra 4:24
	520	Building of temple resumed	Ezra 6:14
	520	Appeals of Haggai and Zechariah	Ezra 6:14
	515	Second temple dedicated	Ezra 6:16-22
	478	Esther made queen by Xerxes	Esther 2:17
	473	Haman's plot fails	Esther 7:10
	458	Ezra given a commission	Ezra 7:11-26
	445	Nehemiah governor of Jerusalem	Neh. 2
	432	Second visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem	Neh. 13:4-7

	335	Alexander the Great becomes monarch of the East
	320	Ptolemy Lagus surprises Jerusalem
VII	277	Septuagint Version of the scriptures ordered
	170	Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian, captures Jerusalem
From the Close of Old Testament History to the Birth of Christ	166	Jews revolt and Judas Maccabæus becomes governor of Jerusalem
	63	Jerusalem becomes a Roman province
	40	Herod made king
	28	Augustus Cæsar becomes emperor of Rome
	18	Herod's temple begun
	4	Birth of Christ

SAMUEL

With the entrance of the Israelites into the land of Canaan, there began a struggle which continued with some brief respites until the entire nation was taken into captivity, and indeed, the struggle continued until the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus in A. D. 70. In fact the struggles of the Jewish race are not yet ended. Upon Israel's entrance into their own country the inhabitants of the land sought to retain possession of it. Under the leadership of Joshua and with the help of the Lord the enemies of Israel were subdued and driven out to a great extent, but there remained the Philistines in the west and southwest of Palestine to annoy them and, at times, to subdue them. Other nations made attacks upon God's people and sometimes were victorious. The government was a theocracy. God was the acknowledged ruler, yet the people were not always true to this acknowledgment and punishment came upon them through the attacks of their enemies.

There was a demand for a leader who would unite the various tribes of the nation and thus protect the interests of every part. The tribes were closely related and in reality constituted a national unity. They must be brought to realize this oneness and must be led to acknowledge God more fully than they had hitherto and to serve him truly. The man needed must be a man of God, a man in full sympathy with his people, a man who would command the respect of those among whom he stood as chief and a man who had ability to administer justice. God raised up several judges of ability and influence, such as Gideon and Eli, who acted for the good of Israel; but in Samuel he gave to the nation the man needed to direct God's people and unite them as they had not been in centuries.

Samuel came of an excellent ancestry. When we wish to cite an example of noble motherhood, we mention the name of Hannah. Her prayer for offspring and her pledge of full consecration to God of the child asked for give to her a high place among the great characters of the Bible. Samuel's life was wholly given to God. The act of Hannah in loaning him to the Lord in his childhood was confirmed by the boy himself as he came to years of understanding. Samuel was a Levite. In 1 Chron. 6:33-38 we read the genealogy of the family of Elkanah, Samuel's father. His home was in the bounds of the tribe of Ephraim.

By virtue of the ancestry, early training and the divine call of Samuel he was well fitted to do the work that was demanded of him. The record of his life shows that he was a man of faith, piety, patriotism, strength and action. At an early age God called him and entrusted to him a weighty message for Eli. His integrity was put to the test when he was called upon to tell his master Eli, the judge of Israel, what God had said.

Samuel was a man of rare ability. He was face to face with great difficulties as he entered upon the task that God assigned to him. The nation of Israel was disorganized and Samuel was the man to bring order out of confusion. He was to take his place between God and the people. It was for him to tell the people what God told him. He was a man of ability as a general. When the Philistines came against Israel, Samuel knew what to do. He acknowledged God and gave careful attention to his worship, and then victory came to Israel over their powerful enemy. Samuel gave careful attention to the ark of the covenant and to the altar of God. He was not only a prophet and a judge, but he was also a priest. He offered sacrifices to God. He was the leader of Israel. He went from place to place to administer justice.

Samuel was judge in Israel in a most critical period. The demand of the people was for a king. His sons, whom he had associated with himself in the judgeship, did not please the people, for they were unjust and failed to discharge their duty properly. This led Israel to make strong demands for a king. Samuel was divinely assured that the people had not rejected him, but they had rejected the Lord. Samuel anointed two kings, yet he was never king. However, he exerted a powerful influence over the nation as long as he lived.

LESSON I

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Dec. 28. God's patience with Israel.—Judges 2:7-19. Tu.—Israel and the nations.—Judges 2:20–3:6. Wed.—Oppression and deliverance.—Judges 3:7-23. Th.—Praise for Jehovah's goodness.—Psa. 145:8-21. Fr.—Praise for Jehovah's mercies.—Psa. 103:1-14. Sat.—God's mercy to Israel.—Hosea 11:1-11. Su.—Song of deliverance.—Exod. 15:1-13.

God's Patience with Israel. Judges 2: 7-19.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 11, 12)

SUPT.—7 And the people served the Lord all the days of Josh'u-a, and all the days of the elders that outlived Josh'u-a, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Is'ra-el.

School.—8 And Josh'u-a the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old.

9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Tim'nath-he-res, in the mount of E'phra-im, on the north side of the hill Ga'ash.

10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Is'ra-el.

11 And the children of Is'ra-el did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Ba'a-lim.

12 And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of E'gypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger.

13 And they forsook the Lord, and served Ba'al and Ash'ta-roth.

14 And the anger of the Lord was hot against Is'ra-el, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

16 Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them.

17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the Lord; but they did not so.

18 And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the Lord because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.

*AMERICAN REVISION

7 And the people served Jehovah all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel. 8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Jehovah, died, being a hundred and ten years old. 9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill-country of Ephraim, on the north of the mountain of Gaash. 10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, that knew not Jehovah, nor yet the work which he had wrought for Israel.

11 And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and served the Baalim; 12 and they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the peoples that were round about them, and bowed themselves down unto them: and they provoked Jehovah to anger. 13 And they forsook Jehovah, and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. 14 And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that despoiled them; and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. 15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of Jehovah was against them for evil, as Jehovah had spoken, and as Jehovah had sworn unto them: and they were sore distressed.

16 And Jehovah raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those that despoiled them. 17 And yet they hearkened not unto their judges; for they played the harlot after other gods, and bowed themselves down unto them: they turned aside quickly out of the way wherein their fathers walked, obeying the commandments of Jehovah; but they did not so. 18 And when Jehovah raised them up judges, then Jehovah was with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented Jehovah because of their groaning by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them. 19 But it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they turned back, and dealt more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their doings, nor from their stubborn way.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely. Hosea 14:4.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord hears the cry of the penitent.**

TOPIC.—**God's methods.**

OUTLINE.—**I. The death of Joshua. II. Israel forsaking God. III. Deliverers raised up.**

TIME.—**Joshua died B. C. 1426; Israel forsook God probably about B. C. 1400.**

PLACE.—**Canaan.**

INTRODUCTION.—The lessons at the close of 1913 included the account of Israel's entrance into Canaan, the occupation of the country, and the division of the land among the tribes. We continue now the study of Israelitish history from the time of Joshua under the administration of the judges. The history is found in the Book of Judges. The length of this period is about three hundred years, from the death of Joshua to the time of Samuel, yet so little is said definitely about time, that it is impossible to fix the dates with exactness. It is not improbable that the administrations of some of the judges overlapped. The authorship of the book is by Jewish tradition ascribed to Samuel. The Book of Judges consists of three parts. The first part, 1:1–2:5, gives events in Israel directly after the death of Joshua. The

second, 2: 6–16: 31, is taken up with the accounts of the judges of Israel. The third, 17: 1–21: 25, throws light upon the condition of Israel at that time.

COMMENTARY.—I. THE DEATH OF JOSHUA (vs. 7-9). **7. served the Lord**—Israel was, first of all, a religious people. They recognized God as their ruler, both in matters of secular life, and in spiritual things. Their government was therefore a theocracy. They served the Lord as they kept his commandments. They had solemnly promised to do this when Joshua assumed the leadership of Israel by the Lord's appointment (Josh. 1: 16). **all the days of Joshua**—Joshua lived twenty-five years after Israel entered Canaan. His earnest religious character and his strong personality enabled him to exert a powerful influence for good upon his people. **elders that outlived Joshua**—The elders were the recognized leaders of the several tribes of Israel. They probably lived about twenty-five years after Joshua's death. **great works**—They had witnessed the great works of God in Israel's behalf during the latter part of their journey toward Canaan, and in making a passage for them across the Jordan and in helping them to drive out their enemies. **8. servant of the Lord**—Joshua is first mentioned in Exod. 17: 9, and he was for nearly forty years Moses' faithful servant and companion. **9. Timnath-heres**—The location of this place is uncertain. Eminent scholars accept the Jewish tradition that it was nine miles south of Shechem. This was the inheritance given to him by Israel after he had divided the land between the tribes according to God's direction.

II. ISRAEL FORSAKING GOD (vs. 10-15). **10. were gathered unto their fathers**—This expression means that they died. **knew not the Lord**—The leaders of Israel at this time neglected the true God. If the fathers had taught his law to their children, they were disobedient to it and went after other gods. **nor yet the works**—They had not seen the miraculous works which God had wrought for them, nor had they been impressed upon their minds by their parents. **11. did evil**—They forgot God and as a consequence they went into sin. **served Baalim**—Baalim is the plural of Baal. There were many heathen deities that were known by that name. Baal-worship was common in Syria. It was grossly licentious and corrupted the morals of all who took part in it. **12. forsook the Lord God of their fathers**—This was a fearful charge to bring against God's chosen, special people. They forsook him who had marvelously protected Israel and provided for them, and went after gods that could do nothing for them. It was the basest ingratitude on their part, and the most inexcusable departure from the God of their fathers. **provoked the Lord to anger**—Incurred his displeasure. **13. Ashtaroth**—The plural of Ashtareth. This was the female deity corresponding to the male deity Baal. The worship offered to her was grossly impure. **14. delivered them into the hands of spoilers**—The Lord gave them over as a punishment to their enemies, to bands of plunderers, who defeated them in battle and carried away their property. **sold them**—They were God's peculiar people, but because of their sins he let them fall into the power of others. He withdrew his protection from them. **15. hand of the Lord was against them**—It was very different to have the Lord working against them, from what it had been to have him working miraculously for them, as he had been doing for nearly a hundred years.

III. DELIVERERS RAISED UP (vs. 16-19). **16. nevertheless**—This word indicates a change in the thought and purpose of God. He had "sold" them to be punished, and then he worked signally in their behalf. **the Lord raised up judges**—The judges whom the Lord raised up were by no means officers to administer justice. They were more especially military leaders, whom the Lord endowed with powers of mind and body to inspire Israel's enemies with fear or to defeat them in battle. The judges had to some extent to do with the execution of law. Samuel went from place to place to hear causes and to pronounce judgment. The Lord raised up these persons. It was his work, even if human instrumentality was employed. **delivered them**—With God it was an easy matter to give Israel over into the hands of enemies that the nation might be punished, and it was easy also for him to employ means for that people's deliverance. In numerous instances the judges wrought deliverances through the direct interposition of the Lord himself.

17. they would not hearken—This statement shows the perversity of the human heart. Even when the Lord raised up deliverers and signally wrought with them for the relief of his people, they refused to give heed to them. **went.... after other gods**—They left the true God, whom they had promised to love and serve, and went after the gods of the peoples around them. Their act is here compared to that of a man who deserts his wife and seeks to become joined to another woman. The people of Israel were untrue to their vows and convictions. They offered worship to heathen deities. **turned quickly out of the way**—It was a comparatively short time after Joshua's death, and almost immediately after the death of his successors, that the Israelites departed from the God of their fathers. Their fathers walked in the way of faith and obedience and enjoyed the divine favor. **obeying the commandments of the Lord**—The commandments given by Moses at Sinai were acknowledged to be still in force. **they did not so**—While their fathers had been careful to observe God's law, the children turned away from it, thus dishonoring both God and their fathers.

18. the Lord was with the judge—It was because the Lord was merciful toward Israel that he raised up deliverers for them; and as he raised them up, he was with them to direct and empower them to do the work to which he had called them. **it repented the Lord because of their groanings**—The Lord is unchangeable, and does not repent in the sense in which men do. The term is used in an accommodated sense. God changes his course only as men change their attitude toward him. When men rebel against him, he condemns them; and when they repent, he forgives them. The Lord was moved by the groanings of his people. **19. when the judge was dead**—It is to be remembered that God raised up the judge and was with him, therefore he had an influence for good with the people as long as he lived. The fact that the people went into sin when the judge died shows how strong an influence he had over the people.

QUESTIONS.—Give a brief account of the life of Joshua. What was the last service he rendered to Israel? What was his influence upon his nation? What took place in the religious life of Israel after his death? Why was punishment visited upon the nation? For what purpose were judges raised up? What proof is there of God's compassion toward Israel?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The lessons for 1913 were on the Old Testament from the creation to the settlement of Israel in Canaan. 2. This year's course continues the study of Old Testament history to the captivity of Israel. 3. Moral and spiritual lessons taught by Bible history and biography. 4. The Book of Judges. (1) Subject-matter. (2) Authorship.

II. THEME.—Deliverers for Israel.

III. ISRAEL'S NEED.—1. Joshua as Israel's leader. (1) His early life. (2) His companionship with Moses. (3) His faith and courage. (4) His appointment to the leadership of Israel. (5) His influence over his people. 2. The condition of Israel under the immediate successors of Joshua. (1) These men knew the Lord and were witnesses of his miracles in Israel's behalf. (2) The faith and obedience of Israel. 3. Israel's departure from God. (1) The law of God neglected. (2) The attraction of heathen worship to Israel. (3) Forsaking God. 4. Punishment for sin. (1) Shows God's displeasure. (2) An effort to bring Israel to repentance.

IV. GOD'S COMPASSION.—1. He loved Israel. (1) He called Abraham. (2) His providential care for the nation. (3) His patience with the Israelites on their way to Canaan. 2. His punishment of his people was to bring them to repentance. 3. His attention to their groanings. 4. Instances of God's mercy to his people.

V. THE JUDGES.—1. Divinely appointed. (1) From different tribes. (2) From different walks in life. (3) Of different dispositions. 2. Their work. (1) To subdue the enemies of Israel. (2) To administer justice. 3. The government was a theocracy and the judges were God's representatives. 4. The judges for the most part exerted their influence locally. 5. God's mercy shown in their appointment and work.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**God's methods.**

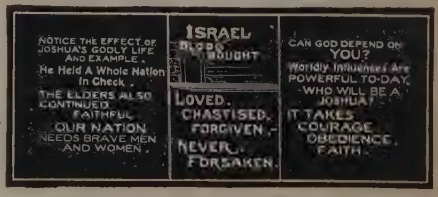
I. Of convincing men of sin.
II. Of restoring the sinner.

I. Of convincing men of sin. This opening lesson sums up the Book of Judges, and also the history of Israel for over four hundred years. It sounds the main theme of the story which follows, the sins of the nation repeated over and over again, relapse into idolatry, retribution, respite and deliverance and brief return to God. Israel had all the human factors of success, a fruitful country, a genial climate, experience in arts of war and peace and the prestige of a triumphal march from Egypt to Canaan, the land which God designed for them to subdue unto themselves. There was seemingly enough to make them a power among the nations, but the one indispensable thing was missing, the divine favor, which they had forfeited by their sin which consisted in sparing the Canaanites in contempt and violation of God's covenant with them and his commandments to them. They grew familiar with them and indulged them. The whole generation of Israel who had seen the mighty deeds which attended the conquest of Canaan stood firm in obedience to God, but the rising generation severed themselves from the past and lapsed into a state of indolence and indifference. They devoted themselves to the business of the world. They became self-indulgent, forgetful of God and his holy cause, and were easily drawn aside to the worship of false gods with all its abominable superstitions. The nation was no longer braced by one common ambition or bent upon one object. Joshua's influence with the Israelitish nation had been such, that for a period of a little less than a half-century it sufficed to keep the fickle-minded people steadfast in their allegiance to the God of their fathers. His constant endeavor was to promote God's glory in everything. He possessed force of character, inflexible principle, quick discernment, lofty courage and constant unselfishness. Israel felt the force of his personal testimony and influence. He had succeeded Moses as the mediator of the covenant. He was the living witness of all that had been done in the exodus and at Sinai. Human nature, the same in all ages, was slow to learn the absolute and unalterable conditions of prosperity, that sin and suffering are inseparably linked together. Israel's first homage at heathen altars deprived them of their secret power and the doom of apostasy began to fulfil itself. They were no longer able to stand before their enemies. Their tempters became their tormentors. They were sold as insolvent debtors to sin. God was true to his threatenings. Mercies despised, privileges scorned, pledges made to God in covenant and broken, became the foundation for their towering iniquity. Nevertheless they were made to realize the stern justice of Jehovah's government. Though the link of faith between Joshua's generation and their own had not been strongly forged, and their devotion to the old deities of the native population took the precedence, they were convinced that they could not multiply gods without the chastisement of the one God who had brought Israel from Egypt to Canaan to establish them as his people. All advancement and prosperity gave place to defeat and discouragement.

II. Of restoring the sinner. As often as the sins of the people brought down God's chastisements and those chastisements produced repentance, judges were raised up to repel the invader and restore peace and tranquillity. It is God's method to elevate and save nations by the influence of men, whom he brings forward for that purpose. He raised up judges in Israel as the exigencies of the times required. He sent them forth impelled by an inward inspiration to act in his name. They were the chief magistrates of the Hebrew commonwealth. They had to deal with religious and civil affairs, for a fluctuating and unsettled nation, where the contest was sharp between true religion and superstition, and where the effects of each were strongly contrasted. The period of the judges showed in a remarkable way the long-suffering of God toward Israel. The people sinned and were punished. They repented and found mercy. Justice and mercy alternated.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Neglect of home religion (v. 10). The standing rebuke to the doctrine of the ascent of man is his tendency to degeneration. Reversion of type is a scientific truth. Some one has said there are only three generations from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves. That is to say, one man, through hard labor and unremitting toil, becomes wealthy; dying, he leaves his wealth to his son, and, by the time the grandson comes to manhood, the wealth is gone and he is working for a living as his grandfather did in the beginning. The Israelites failed to teach their children God's truth, and in a single generation "they knew not God." It is said the harts of Scythia teach their young to leap from rock to rock and from bank to bank by leaping before them. Thus taught to do what they would never have learned by themselves, they are enabled to escape when pursued by man or beast. So, if children are to escape that mighty hunter, Satan, they must be exercised unto godliness and principled in the ways of God when young.

Backsliding (Golden Text). This sin has been the curse of every age. The first step is the one fraught with the greatest danger. The following incident taken from the life of Dr. Judson may come as a timely word of warning to some reader of these lines. A native Christian woman was about to engage in something which Dr. Judson considered not conducive to her spiritual good. He sent for her and remonstrated; but she would not give up her darling project. "Look here!" said he, snatching a ruler from the table and tracing a not very straight line upon the floor, "here is where you have been walking. You have made a crooked path, to be sure; out of the path half the time; but then you have kept near it, and not taken to new roads, and you have—not so much as you might have done, mind, but still to a certain extent—grown in grace; and now with all this growth upon your heart and head, in the maturity of your years, with ripened understanding and an every day deepening sense of the goodness of God, here," bringing the ruler down with emphasis to indicate a certain position, "here you stand. You know where this path leads. You know what is before you. Some struggles, some honors, and finally, eternal life and a crown of glory. But to the left branches off another very pleasant road, and along the air floats, rather temptingly, a pretty bubble. You do not mean to leave the path you have walked in fifteen years, fifteen long years, altogether; you only want to step aside and catch the bubble, and you think you will come back again; but you never will. Woman, think! Dare you deliberately leave this straight and narrow path, drawn by the Savior's finger, and go away for one moment into that of your enemy? Will you? Will you? Will you?" By this time the woman was sobbing so that she could not speak a word, but Dr. Judson knew what she meant and knelt down and prayed that she might be preserved in her determination to be true. The woman said, "From that time, whenever I am unusually tempted I see the teacher as he looked that day, bending over in his chair, the ruler placed upon the floor to represent me, his finger pointing along the path of eternal life, his eye looking so strangely over his shoulder, and that terrible 'Will you?' coming from his lips as though it was the voice of God; and I pray just as Peter did, for I am frightened."

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—God shows mercy to all.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Joshua's influence
Israel's wickedness
Judges raised up

Looking backward. To make a good start in the course for the year, it will be of profit to connect it with the course for 1913. This can be done by showing that we are studying about the same people that crossed the Red Sea to get out of slavery, and that crossed the Jordan River to get into their own country. Review the beginnings of the Israelitish nation by telling the story of Abraham's call and removal to Canaan. To show the steps by which Israel came into Egypt, tell the story of Joseph. Show the way God delivered the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage by telling the story of Moses. These stories bring us up to the time when Joshua became prominent. We are now prepared to enter upon the study of the present year.

The story of Joshua. Two or three incidents in the life of Joshua show what a good man he was and how he was able to help other people to be good. Tell about Joshua as a young man. Moses took him with him when he went up on Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from the Lord. He was with Moses as he came down, and saw the Israelites worshiping the golden calf. Tell the story of Joshua's faith and courage when he came back with the other spies who had been searching out Canaan. He was faithful in little things, and when a new leader was needed for Israel at Moses' death, the Lord chose him. For about twenty-five years Joshua led Israel, and all the tribes had their places given to them in the good land. He was good and he helped his people to obey the Lord. Call out from the children their ideas of how a father, mother or teacher helps children to do right, and inquire how a child can help other children to be good.

Israel's sin. Tell the story of Joshua's death and the leaders that took his place. Israel was thankful for good leaders and for a time the people served the Lord. Show the loss there is to those who do not know the Lord and his word. Note the fact that all around the Israelites there were those who worshiped idols, and they influenced the Israelites to worship idols also. Show how harmful it is likely to be to go with bad companions. God is displeased with those who sin against him and he punishes them.

Israel's judges. Parents punish their children for disobeying them. God punished Israel by allowing their enemies to attack them and take away their goods. After this punishment or while Israel was suffering, the Lord appointed judges to drive away Israel's enemies. God loved his people then and he loves them now. He gave them another chance to serve him. He has mercy upon us. It is not necessary for one to fall into sin, but if one does, he can call in penitence and faith upon God and be forgiven.

LESSON II

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Jan. 4.—Deborah and Barak deliver Israel.—Judges 4:4-16. Tu.—The song of Deborah.—Judges 5:1-22. Wed.—Abram delivers Lot.—Gen. 14:11-24. Th.—Jehovah delivers the Israelites.—Exod. 14:15-25. Fr.—David rescues his people.—1 Sam. 30:16-25. Sat.—Jehovah saves Jerusalem.—Isa. 37:26-36. Su.—Jehovah the deliverer.—Isa. 59:9-21.

Deborah and Barak Deliver Israel.—Judges 4: 4-23; 5: 1-22. Print 4: 4-16.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses 4:14, 15)

SUPT.—4 And Deb'o-rah, a prophetess, the wife of Lap'i-doth, she judged Is'ra-el at that time.

School.—5 And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deb'o-rah between Ra'mah and Beth'-el in mount E'phra-im: and the children of Is'ra-el came up to her for judgment.

6 And she sent and called Bar'ak the son of A-bin'o-am out of Ke'desh-naph'ta-li, and said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Is'ra-el commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Ta'bor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naph'ta-li and of the children of Ze-bu'lun?

7 And I will draw unto thee to the river Ki'shon Sis'e-ra, the captain of Ja'bin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.

8 And Bar'ak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.

9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the Lord shall sell Sis'e-ra into the hand of a woman. And Deb'o-rah arose, and went with Bar'ak to Ke'desh.

10 And Bar'ak called Ze-bu'lun and Naph'ta-li to Ke'desh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deb'o-rah went up with him.

11 Now He'ber the Ke'nite, which was of the children of Ho'bab the father in law of Mo'ses, had severed himself from the Ke'nites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Za-a-na'im, which is by Ke'desh.

12 And they shewed Sis'e-ra that Bar'ak the son of A-bin'o-am was gone up to mount Ta'bor.

13 And Sis'e-ra gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Ha-ro'sheth of the Gen'tiles unto the river of Ki'shon.

14 And Deb'o-rah said unto Bar'ak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sis'e-ra into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Bar'ak went down from mount Ta'bor, and ten thousand men after him.

15 And the Lord discomfited Sis'e-ra, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Bar'ak; so that Sis'e-ra lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet.

16 But Bar'ak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Ha-ro'sheth of the Gen'tiles: and all the host of Sis'e-ra fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left.

*AMERICAN REVISION

4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she judged Israel at that time. 5 And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in the hill-country of Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. 6 And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not Jehovah, the God of Israel, commanded, saying, Go and draw unto mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? 7 And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thy hand. 8 And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go. 9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh. 10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali together to Kedesh; and there went up ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

11 Now Heber the Kenite had separated himself from the Kenites, even from the children of Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent as far as the oak in Zaanannim, which is by Kedesh.

12 And they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor. 13 And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles, unto the river Kishon. 14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which Jehovah hath delivered Sisera into thy hand: is not Jehovah gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. 15 And Jehovah discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his hosts, with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from his chariot, and fled away on his feet. 16 But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; there was not a man left.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. Psa. 34:17.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord is strong in behalf of his people.**

TOPIC.—**Israel called to freedom.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Deliverance promised. II. Victory for Israel. III. The song of triumph.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1300.**

PLACE.—**Northern Canaan.**

INTRODUCTION.—The tribes of Israel were repeatedly oppressed by their enemies, as they forsook the true God. Several Canaanitish nations were spared, and these became troublesome to God's people, both because they intermarried with them and were attacked by them in war and often defeated. They had trouble also with other nations. They were subdued by Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, and oppressed eight years, until the Lord raised up Othniel as their judge and liberator. Then there was peace for forty years. After that Eglon, king of Moab, oppressed them, as God's means of punishing them for their departure from him. Ehud was raised up to free Israel from the Moabitish yoke, and the land had rest for eighty years. Because they again fell into sin, the Lord permitted Jabin, king of Canaan, to triumph over them for twenty years. They cried to the Lord and he heard their plea. He brought deliverance to them through Deborah and Barak, the account of which we study in to-day's lesson. It is easy to observe God's attitude toward sin and his mercy toward the sinner.

COMMENTARY.—I. DELIVERANCE PROMISED (4:4-9). **4. Deborah, a prophetess**—She was a woman of the tribe of Ephraim, whom God raised up to judge Israel and to act with him in their deliverance from the oppression of Jabin. She is called a prophetess, since she spoke the messages God gave her for his people. The song recorded in the following chapter gives evidence of her inspiration as a prophetess, and shows that she possessed poetic ability. She was the wife of Lapidoth. **5. under the palm tree**—She had her place of judgment in the open air under a palm tree, as is common still in Oriental countries. **came up to her for judgment**—She had divine authority for acting as judge and the people of the tribes over which she had jurisdiction recognized that authority by coming to her to have their cases passed upon. **6. Barak**—Barak was the commander of the army, yet he was subordinate to the judge. **hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded**—Deborah had received a message from God, and used the language here employed to declare most emphatically that the Lord had spoken to her. **toward mount Tabor**—This was to be the gathering place of the army of Israel, made up of men from Naphtali and Zebulon. Tabor stands in the northeastern part of the beautiful plain of Esdraelon. It is a circular, cone-like mountain rising one thousand seven hundred feet above the plain. Upon the broad top of this mountain Israel's army of ten thousand men was to take a position. Tabor overlooks the plain of Jezreel, which has been the battle-ground of the ages. Not far from here King Saul met his death. **7. the river Kishon**—The Kishon is a small stream flowing westward through the plain of Esdraelon and empties into the Mediterranean just north of Mount Carmel. **Sisera**—The commander of Jabin's army. **his chariots and his multitude**—The language indicates that the enemy of Israel was well equipped and large. **will deliver him into thine hand**—The Lord made known the size of Sisera's army, large in comparison with that of Barak, but he gave most positive assurance that this great army would be defeated.

8. if thou wilt go with me, then I will go—He could not be satisfied with a mission from God by the mouth of a divinely accredited messenger. He needed some visible presence to assure him of the invisible strength on which he had to depend.—*Cam. Bib.* Barak thought the presence of the one to whom the Lord had given the directions for the battle and the promise of victory, would be a guaranty of success. **9. shall not be for thine honour**—The honor for the victory and for the destruction of Sisera would be given to the Lord and a woman (4:21). Some scholars suppose that decided honor would have been accorded to Barak if he had gone forward unquestioningly, and had not insisted on Deborah's going with the army.

II. VICTORY FOR ISRAEL (4:10-23). **10. at his feet**—At his command. By many this expression is understood to mean that there were only foot-soldiers in Barak's army, and but ten thousand of them, in contrast to Sisera's great multitude, accompanied by nine hundred chariots of iron. **11. the father in law**—It means here brother-in-law. The expression in Hebrew indicates any near connection by marriage. **pitched his tent**—The location of Heber's tent is stated particularly to make what follows more vivid. It was here that Sisera met his death. The place is supposed to have been a short distance north of Tabor. **12. was gone up to mount Tabor**—Comparing this expression with verse 14 it seems clear that Barak and his army ascended the mountain: There may have been a purpose in his mind to get beyond the reach of Sisera's chariots. **13. Gentiles**—Nations. **14. Deborah said unto Barak**—The prophetess received directions from the Lord for the leader of Israel's army. **up; for this is the day**—The oppression of twenty years by Jabin was to come to an end on that day. The Lord was moving against Israel's enemies and it was time for Barak's army to advance. Such words as the Lord gave Barak through Deborah could not fail to inspire him with courage for the attack.

15. the Lord discomfited Sisera—This word gives scarcely an adequate idea of the sudden terror and confusion into which Sisera's host fell at the unexpected onslaught of Barak.—*Lias.* In verse 20 of the fifth chapter it is said, "They fought from heaven," Josephus declares that a hail-storm came on, which rendered the bows and slings of the Canaanites useless and benumbed the soldiers with cold. The record here declares that the Canaanites fell before the army of Barak. It would be natural to suppose that a storm that would affect the Canaanites would likewise affect the Israelites also. **Sisera....fled away**—He hoped to escape by flight on foot. **16. there was not a man left**—There was no one left to oppose the army of Barak.

17-23. Sisera believed he would be safe in the tent of Jael to which he fled. There was peace between him and Heber, Jael's husband. According to custom it was not allowable for a strange man to enter a woman's tent, hence, if in the urgency of his need he was permitted to go in, his pursuers would not dare to enter to search for him. Sisera was much mistaken in his fancied security, for Jael was Israel's friend rather than his, and she took advantage of the situation to cause his death. She hid him from his pursuers, and then drove a tent-pin through his temples. Thus the prophecy of Deborah was completely fulfilled. The Canaanites did not again contest Israel's supremacy.

III. THE SONG OF TRIUMPH (5:1-22). The song of Deborah and Barak is a vivid poetic description of the signal victory of Israel over the Canaanites. It is hearty in its ascription of praise to God for the defeat of those who had been long oppressing his chosen people. Deborah speaks of herself as a "mother in Israel." When Israel "chose new gods," there was "war in the gates," showing the direct connection between the nation's idolatry and the trouble that came upon it. There was abundant occasion for rejoicing since the Lord had marvelously undertaken for his people. The people had rallied to the support of Deborah and Barak. In the song reference is made to several of the tribes of Israel who had a part in the great victory, and a curse is pronounced upon a city whose people failed to respond to the call to war.

QUESTIONS.—What was the kind of government under which Israel was living? What nations had oppressed Israel and who had delivered them? What king was now oppressing the nation? To whom did the Lord give directions for Israel's victory? Describe Israel's army. Describe the army of Israel's enemy. What message came to the leader of Israel's army on the day of the battle? Where was the battle fought and what was the result? What was the fate of the leader of the army of the Canaanites? Describe the song of Deborah and Barak.

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The length of time between the last lesson and this. 2. The nations left by Israel in Canaan. (1) Purpose in leaving them. (2) Their effect upon Israel. 3. The oppression by Chushan-rishathaim; the judge raised up for deliverance from him. 4. The oppression by Eglon the Moabite and the deliverance of Israel from him. 5. Connection between sin and punishment.

II. THEME.—Victory for Israel.

III. A POWERFUL ENEMY.—1. Israel sinned again after the death of Ehud, the judge who delivered the nation from Eglon. 2. A long period of peace. 3. Jabin, the king of Canaan. (1) His kingdom was in northern Palestine. (2) His great army was called a multitude. (3) Chariots of iron, or war chariots. (4) Jabin desired to subdue Israel and the Lord permitted him to oppress them, thus bringing punishment upon them for their sins.

IV. THE PROMISE OF HELP.—1. Deborah. (1) A prophetess. (2) A judge. (3) A woman of faith and courage. 2. God's message for Israel. 3. Barak, the commander of Israel's army. (1) Summoned by Deborah. (2) His plea for Deborah's presence in the campaign. 4. The assurance of victory.

V. THE VICTORY.—1. Israel's army. (1) Ten thousand, the number ordered by the Lord. (2) All footmen. No chariots. 2. The place of assembly, Mount Tabor. 3. The order to attack given by Deborah. 4. The confusion of Sisera's army. 5. The flight of Sisera. 6. The death of Sisera. 7. The destruction of the army of Jabin. 8. The song of triumph of Deborah and Barak. 9. The certainty of victory for those who obey God.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**Israel called to freedom.**

I. The summons.
II. The review.

I. The summons. It was a time of miserable thraldom in Israel when Deborah became aware of her calling, and began the sacred enterprise of her life. Little by little the cities Joshua had destroyed were rebuilt, refortified and made centers of warlike preparation. The old inhabitants of the land had recovered spirit while Israel had lapsed from her commission. Deborah broke the dark spell which held the tribes and taught them anew how to believe and pray. On account of their unfaithfulness the Israelites had been oppressed by Jabin for twenty years. At this time they were in great distress, their independence gone, a great heathen power overshadowing and oppressing them by military violence, while all means of resistance was at an end. But Israel was fired with new-found repentance, patriotism and divine inspiration. There was work for the seer and for the warrior. Deborah's knowledge and sagacity had won place and established her influence in Israel. She was an extraordinary woman in strength of understanding and of will, in soundness of judgment, in splendid courage and in warmth of heart. There was neither king nor judge, neither prophet nor psalmist in all Israel in those evil days until Deborah arose. Her house in Mount Ephraim was a refuge to all the oppressed. By wise, statesmanlike measures, internal administration and a strong central government she secured the fruits of military success. The inspiration of God gave her understanding. The armies were in marked contrast in respect to resources, numbers, strategic position, prestige and skilled leadership, yet Sisera fled in panic.

II. The review. Deborah gave two reasons why her enterprise was successful. First, the leaders acted courageously, and second, the people willingly followed, but beyond all, she noted gratefully the interference of God in behalf of the nation. She found cause for thankfulness in the peaceful and happy state of the country, contrasted with its condition under the oppression of Jabin, when all trade was stopped, where traveling had become unsafe, where there was no tilling of the ground, when there was no administration of justice, and when no dependence could be placed on the military strength of her country. Anarchy and misrule held sovereign sway, and order and good government were banished from the land. Deborah called upon the people in general to testify by a song of thanksgiving to God for their great transforming deliverance, as national recognition of God would be most impressive and instructive. In her great song Deborah brought out the characteristics of the several tribes at the time of the national crisis. Some were noticed reprehensively because of the contentions and strifes among them, for the love of ease and unwillingness to endure hardship and to encounter difficulties, for an absorbing interest in worldly engagements and for an inconsiderate spirit which amounted to religious indifference. Deborah scorned the critical Reubenites, judged the Danites unreasonable, while she charged the people of Meroz with selfishness, neglect and impiety, as they had opportunity to strike a decisive blow against their enemies. Under the Jewish dispensation there was a lower standard of religious perfection than is held now. Jael's deed is not to be judged by itself in the abstract, still less by the light of the gospel, but according to the code under which she lived and the knowledge of the divine will as it was then known among men. Deborah understood her and read clearly her swift decision and unscrupulous act, and saw back of all the purpose of serving Israel. Her praise of Jael was therefore with that knowledge though she would not have done the deed she praised. Amid cruelty and murder, amid the unutterable abominations and terrors of heathenism Deborah's heart taught her that love was the greatest virtue although her thought was strangely blended with the fierceness of the times in which she lived. Forty years of rest were enjoyed by simply rejecting all false gods and abiding true to the God of Israel. The continuous policy of Deborah achieved the reconstitution of the land and its freedom from internal lawlessness.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

A woman's sphere. That Deborah was a strong character, all will admit. That she was a prophetess and received clear communications from Jehovah, the record proves. That she was but human, her cutting, sarcastic reply to Barak (v. 9) is an instance. But the story as a whole is illustrative of woman's record from the beginning. When man is wanting, when his faith has become eclipsed and when his strength has become as water, she has kept up her spirit and hope to the end. And it is this clearness of vision, this undying hope, this deathless inspiration that creates the atmosphere of a woman's true sphere. In the language of John Ruskin this important sphere is expressed thus: "And whether consciously or not, you must be, in many a heart, enthroned: there is no putting by that crown; queens you must always be; queens to your lovers; queens to your husbands and your sons; queens of higher mystery to the world beyond, which bows itself, and will forever bow, before the myrtle crown, and the stainless scepter of womanhood. But, alas! you are too often idle and careless queens, grasping at majesty in the least things, while you abdicate it in the greatest; and leaving misrule and violence to work their will among men, in defiance of the power which, holding straight in gift from the Prince of all peace, the wicked among you betray, and the good forget. * * * There is not a war in the world, no, nor an injustice, but you women are answerable for it; not in that you have provoked, but in that you have not hindered. There is no suffering, no injustice, no misery in the earth, but the guilt of it lies with you. Men can bear the sight of it, but you should not be able to bear it. * * * This is wonderful to me—oh, how wonderful—to see the tender and delicate woman among you, * * * go out in the morning into her garden to play with the fringes of its guarded flowers, and lift their heads when they are drooping, with her happy smile upon her face, and no cloud upon her brow, because there is a little wall around her place of peace; and yet she knows, in her heart, if she would only look for its knowledge, that, outside of that little rose-covered wall, the wild grass, to the horizon, is torn up by the agony of men, and beat level by the drift of their lifeblood."

A true hero (v. 8). Barak was a man big enough to forget himself for the sake of the people. One woman set him to his task and another was to finish it, but he moved straight ahead. He was told the journey was not to be for his own honor, but he took it. He gave to his troops the spectacle of a woman marching by his side and advising him in his tactics, but he was unmoved. And why? Some say he was a coward. Deborah seemed to imply it. But Barak's faith was in the God who spoke through Deborah. The command had been to march, but it did not specify when to strike. How would he know unless the prophetess was with him? The sequel proves his wisdom. "This is the day" (v. 14). And because he had divested himself of every selfish motive, and was willing to bear the scornful brand of a coward, and recognized through whom Jehovah would speak, his name is found in God's honor roll of the heroes of faith (Heb. 11:32). Here is an instance of co-operation. Barak did not rebel because Deborah was to have an important part in the deliverance. Working with God they triumphed. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The Lord helps those who trust him.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

ISRAEL { SINNING / PUNISHED / PRAYING / VICTORIOUS

DEBORAH, THE PROPHETESS

A beginning. Let each child in the class tell one thing that he or she knows about Israel. Write on the board words standing for their several answers in their proper order, and add enough to give a short outline of Israelitish history. The lesson to-day has in it the four great truths, sin, punishment, repentance and deliverance. These truths are so simple, that the child can grasp the thoughts, especially if the stories setting them forth are told and other simple illustrations are used.

Israel sinning. Show what the people of Israel were doing that displeased the Lord. Tell about idol-worship, showing pictures of idols. Refer to the second commandment, and note how the people were breaking it. Tell the story of the oppression of Israel by the man with a long name, Chushan-rishathaim, king of the country with a long name, Mesopotamia, and their deliverance by Othniel. Tell the story also of Eglon and Ehud. Boys and girls sometimes do wrong even after they have been punished and forgiven. Israel sinned after Ehud's death. It is too bad that boys and girls repeat their sins. The people of Israel acted both unwisely and wickedly in disobeying God.

The people punished. Let the class give their opinions about punishing those who do wrong. What kinds of punishment do they dread the most. Children who do not obey their parents should be corrected in some way, so that they will remember not to repeat their wrong-doing. God punished the Israelites for breaking the commandments, and he punishes wrong-doers now. Tell about King Jabin, who came from the north, and conquered Israel and made them do just as he wished. They were almost like slaves to him.

Israel praying. In the verse just before the beginning of the lesson we read that Israel cried to the Lord. Ask the children to tell you when people should pray. They will tell you they ought to pray at night before retiring, in the morning upon rising, at family prayers, at prayer-meeting, and when they are in trouble. What does Jesus say about praying? He said that men ought to pray always. While Israel was suffering because of Jabin, they began to pray. The Lord heard them, as he hears all that truly pray.

Israel delivered. Make a line to represent the army of Israel with Barak as leader. Make a line two or three times as long to represent the army of the Canaanites and Sisera, their leader. Deborah, the prophetess, was judge of Israel, and she was in the battle with Barak. The Lord spoke to her and told her how many Israelites should be in the battle, and he told her when the army of Israel should make their attack upon Sisera's army. God was working with his people and gave them a great victory.

LESSON III

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Jan. 11.—The call of Gideon.—Judges 6:11-24. Tu.—Gideon's zeal for Jehovah.—Judges 6:25-40. Wed.—Oppression by Midian.—Judges 6:1-10. Th.—The call of Moses.—Exod. 3:1-10. Fr.—The call of Isaiah.—Isa. 6:1-13. Sat.—The call of Saul (Paul).—Acts 22:1-15. Su.—A holy calling.—2 Tim. 1:14.

The Call of Gideon.—Judges 6: 11-40. Print 6: 11-16, 33-40.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 14-16)

SUPT.—11 And there came an angel of the Lord, and sat under an oak which was in Oph'rah, that pertained unto Jo'ash the A-bi-ez'rite, and his son Gid'e-on threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Mid'i-a-nites.

School.—12 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

13 And Gid'e-on said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from E'gypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Mid'i-a-nites.

14 And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Is'ra-el from the hand of the Mid'i-a-nites: have not I sent thee?

15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Is'ra-el? behold, my family is poor in Ma-nas'seh, and I am the least in my father's house.

16 And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Mid'i-a-nites as one man.

33 Then all the Mid'i-a-nites and the A-mal'ek-ites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jez'reel.

34 But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gid'e-on, and he blew a trumpet; and A-bi-e'zer was gathered after him.

35 And he sent messengers throughout all Ma-nas'seh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Ash'er, and unto Ze-bu'lun, and unto Naph'ta-li; and they came up to meet them.

36 And Gid'e-on said unto God, If thou wilt save Is'ra-el by mine hand, as thou hast said,

37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Is'ra-el by mine hand, as thou hast said.

38 And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.

39 And Gid'e-on said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.

40 And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

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11 And the angel of Jehovah came, and sat under the oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, and said unto him, Jehovah is with thee, thou mighty man of valor. 13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh, my lord, if Jehovah is with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where are all his wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt? but now Jehovah hath cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Midian. 14 And Jehovah looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian: have not I sent thee? 15 And he said unto him, Oh, Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. 16 And Jehovah said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

33 Then all the Midianites and the Amalekites and the children of the east assembled themselves together; and they passed over, and encamped in the valley of Jezreel. 34 But the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered together after him. 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; and they also were gathered together after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

36 And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast spoken, 37 behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing-floor; if there be dew on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the ground, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast spoken. 38 And it was so; for he rose up early on the morrow, and pressed the fleece together, and wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. 39 And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be kindled against me, and I will speak but this once: let me make trial, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. 40 And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Blessed is the man whom thou choosest. Psa. 65:4.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**God calls to special work those who are faithful and capable.**

TOPIC.—**Deliverance for Israel.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Gideon's call. II. A sign given. III. Baal's altar destroyed. IV. Gideon assured.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1250.**

PLACE.—**Plain of Jezreel.**

INTRODUCTION.—Following a period of many years of peace after the victory of Israel over Sisera's army, the hosts of Midian overran the land of Israel and robbed the inhabitants of their flocks and herds and grain. So heavy was the hand of the Midianites upon the people of Israel, that they made use of caves and strongholds in the mountains to protect themselves from their rapacious incursions. In their great distress they cried unto the Lord for help. In answer to their prayer, the Lord sent a prophet to them. He was about to raise up a deliverer for them, but he first sent a prophet to reprove them for their sins. The prophet, whose name is not given, recalled what God had done for his people and what he had promised to do, and then showed them their failure in not obeying the Lord.

COMMENTARY.—I. GIDEON'S CALL (vs. 11-16). 11. an angel of the Lord—It is quite evident that this was he who appeared later as the Mes-

siah. The Revised Version uses the definite article and says, "The angel of the Lord." See Gen. 18:2; Josh. 5:13; Judges 13:3. **Ophrah**—The location is uncertain further than that it was a town in Manasseh. **threshed wheat by the winepress**—"Was beating out wheat in the winepress."—*R. V.* The language indicates the terror the Midianites had brought upon the people of Israel. The usual method of thrashing grain, by having oxen tread it out on smooth, hard spaces of ground, was abandoned, and Gideon was using a stick to beat out the wheat in a winepress, where there was not enough space to use even a flail. In the winepress, which was probably a hollowed out rock, he could hide both the grain and the process of thrashing. **Midianites**—The descendants of Abraham and Keturah. They occupied the Sinaitic peninsula, and had sallied forth from thence to ravage the land of Israel. Moses gained a victory over them just before his death, and for two centuries they had not troubled Israel. They now had become strong and were oppressive.

12. appeared unto him—The call came to Gideon while he was at his work, which was humble, but he was doing the best he could under the circumstances. **the Lord is with thee**—To the knowledge of the fact which Gideon had already, this was a welcome and added assurance. It is an inspiration, a source of strength, to have a divine conviction of God's presence. **thou mighty man of valour**—He was the kind of man for the task which was to be assigned to him. He had physical strength and courage. He had spiritual power, for God was with him. **13. if the Lord be with us, why,** etc.—This was a most natural question to occur to Gideon under the circumstances. The Lord told Gideon that he was with him, not that he was with the people of Israel as a whole. Gideon might well say that the Lord had wrought miracles for Israel's sake in the past, but now he had forsaken them. **14. go in this thy might**—Nothing of the past or of the present should be a hindrance to the fulfilment of God's purpose to deliver Israel. Gideon's might consisted of his physical strength, his courage and his contact with the Lord. **thou shalt save Israel**—The promise is direct and positive. The command was for him to go and success was promised. **have not I sent thee**—This question is equivalent to the positive declaration, "I have sent thee."

15. wherewith shall I save Israel—Gideon was looking over his own resources to see what he could find that would be likely to constitute him a deliverer of Israel, and he could see nothing in himself or in his family in his favor. His family was not noted or rich, and he felt that he was the most unpromising in the family. His humility was greatly in his favor. **16. surely I will be with thee**—Such a promise as this was most reassuring. A similar promise was given to Moses (Exod. 3:12) and to Joshua (Josh. 1:5) and to the apostles (Matt. 28:20), hence the promise is for all who fully obey the Lord. **as one man**—As if all the Midianitish host was a single individual, and he was executed at a stroke.—*Whedon.* The promise shows the suddenness with which the power of Midian would be broken.

II. A SIGN SOUGHT (vs. 17-24). In a matter of such great importance as this, Gideon believed he should have the most perfect assurance that he was being divinely led. This together with his true hospitality led him to desire the messenger to remain and partake of the food he would prepare. What the angel of the Lord would do with the food, might reveal to him whether the messenger was divine or human. When the angel of the Lord touched with his staff the food he had prepared for him, fire came forth from the rock and consumed all the repast that had been provided. Then Gideon was convinced that a heavenly messenger had visited him, and he was afraid. The Lord spoke to him and allayed his fears. Gideon built an altar and called it Jehovah-shalom, the Lord send peace.

III. BAAL'S ALTAR DESTROYED (vs. 25-32). That very night the Lord told Gideon to pull down the altar of Baal and destroy the grove by it. The grove was a wooden pole or statue of Asherah, the female deity corresponding to Baal. Gideon was to cut this up and use it in sacrificing a bullock upon an altar he was to build out of the stones that had composed the altar of Baal. He did this by night. In the morning the men of the place saw that the altar had been destroyed and they accused Gideon of doing it, and demanded that he should be slain. Joash, his father, would not consent to that, saying that Baal should have protected his own altar. The people gave Gideon the name, Jerubbaal, which means Baal-fighter.

IV. GIDEON ASSURED (vs. 33-40). **33. Amalekites**—A wandering race which was then a band of robbers, occupying parts of Canaan. **children of the east**—Wandering tribes whose place was east of the Jordan. These peoples joined with the Midianites in their plundering expeditions through Palestine. **pitched in the valley of Jezreel**—They encamped in the fertile plain or valley leading from the broad plain of Esdraelon to the Jordan. They were there for plunder. **34. the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon**—The Spirit "wrapped him round as with a garment" or took possession of him and moved him to action. **blew a trumpet**—This was the signal for the men of war to assemble. **Abi-ezer**—The family to which Gideon belonged. **35. sent messengers**—The tribes of Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali lay close to Manasseh, to which Gideon belonged, and it was not a great undertaking for the fighting men to gather from thence to Gideon.

36. if thou wilt save....as thou hast said—Gideon believed God, and yet his heart craved still greater assurance. He would test the matter further. **37. dew be on the fleece only**—There are heavy dews in those regions. **38. a bowl full of water**—The test was in accordance with Gideon's wish. The fleece was decidedly wet. **39. let not thine anger be hot against me**—Gideon feared the Lord's displeasure, yet his caution respecting the great work before him led him to make a further test. **upon all the ground let there be dew**—The test was renewed with conditions reversed. **40. God did so**—He saw the sincerity of Gideon and did not chide him nor refuse his request. The fleece was dry and the ground all around was wet with dew. Gideon had no further questionings.

QUESTIONS.—What enemies were troubling Israel? Describe the condition of the Israelites at this time. Who came to Gideon with a message? Who was Gideon and what was he doing? What was he called to do? What sign was given him by the angel of the Lord? What was the first work Gideon was commanded to do? What tribes did Gideon call upon for men of war? Describe the tests which Gideon proposed. Why did he propose these tests?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The judges who had already served Israel. 2. The various enemies of the nation. 3. The tendency of Israel toward idolatry was of long standing. 4. Israel's enemies were the agents by which the Lord accomplished the punishment of his people. 5. The cry to God for help. 6. The connection between penitence and deliverance.

II. THEME.—A call to service.

III. THE CRISIS.—1. A forty-years' period of peace in Israel after Sisera's defeat. 2. The Midianites. (1) Their ancestry. (2) Their location. (3) Their defeat by Moses two hundred years before this. (4) Their strength. 3. Other nations joining with the Midianites. (1) Amalekites. (2) Children of the East. 4. These peoples were overrunning the land of Israel for the sake of plunder. 5. Making use of caves and mountain fastnesses for protection. 6. The fearfulness of the Israelites respecting their harvests. 7. The deplorable condition of a nation whose territory is thus overrun. 8. All a result of sin.

IV. THE MAN CALLED.—1. A man of the tribe of Manasseh. 2. A brave man. 3. A man strong physically. 4. Gideon was a busy man. 5. He was following a humble calling. 6. He was a humble man, distrusting his own ability. 7. He was a cautious man. 8. He was a hospitable man: he entertained the "angel of the Lord." 9. He was obedient to the Lord: he pulled down the altar of Baal at God's command. 10. He was called Jerubbaal, contender with Baal.

V. THE ASSURANCE.—1. The call for warriors. 2. The response. 3. Gideon's plea for further assurance. 4. The first test and the result. 5. The second test and its result. 6. God gives his children opportunity to know his will. 7. Gideon was fully convinced that the Lord had called him.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**Deliverance for Israel.**

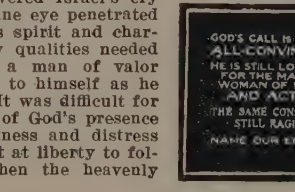
I. From the worship of Baal.
II. From the yoke of Midian.

I. From the worship of Baal. This lesson reveals an extraordinary change in the whole aspect of things in Israel. The chapter opens with a vivid description of the ravages of the Midianites, and the pitiable distress to which Israel was reduced. For seven successive years those ravages were committed, until Israel had become greatly impoverished and disheartened. In all that time not one cry of repentance was heard, not one act of faith in the true God. Spiritual apostasy had brought Israel into national humiliation. When, at last, they cried to the Lord "because of the Midianites" the Lord by his prophet declared the cause of all their trouble to be their disobedience to him. Their idolatry had brought upon them the terrible Midianite servitude. God answered Israel's cry in the call of Gideon. The divine eye penetrated to the very depths of Gideon's spirit and character and saw in him the very qualities needed for his special mission. As a man of valor Gideon was as much unknown to himself as he was to Israel or his enemies. It was difficult for him to reconcile the assurance of God's presence with the signs of actual weakness and distress all around him. Yet he was not at liberty to follow his own private aims when the heavenly voice spoke within him. He must rise, act, dare and risk. The man, the warrior, the captain, the deliverer, the hero must be awakened in him. His own life had to be openly changed. His family had to witness his zeal for God. The growth of Gideon's spiritual character was rapid and decisive. His might consisted in his wholehearted loyalty to God and his humble dependence upon him, coupled with his faith in God's promise and the consciousness of a divine mission. With his commission came the wisdom, the might, the valor, the strategic skill needed to fit him for the expedition in which he was soon to act so prominent a part. Gideon did not undertake the work of subduing the Midianites until he had first effected a religious reform among his people. The first blow in the contest that was coming on must be against Baal worship. Then the Lord would strike a blow against Midian. Gideon's obedience was prompt though attended by personal danger. He destroyed Baal's altar before he built an altar to God.

II. From the yoke of Midian. The work to which Gideon was called was no common task. His response to the call ripened his life into power, resolve and fruitfulness. He renounced all pretense to any superiority. Duty was his, results were with God. In asking a sign from heaven Gideon sought strength to enable him to keep his resolution. Gideon feared himself, his own unfitness and unworthiness, feared in the awful presence of God. His altar was a memorial of his faith, his hope, his gratitude. When peace had filled his own heart he called his altar Jehovah-shalom. Deeper in his own spirit than any desire for warlike honor, there was a yearning after peace for Israel which could come only as they returned to Jehovah their God. Upon the top of that same rock where he had erected his altar and where the angel of the covenant had met him, and where the miracle had been wrought and which had become the place of divine revelation to Gideon, he was directed to build God's altar and offer sacrifice thereon. Then came his trumpet call to Israel. Then Israel recognized in him, who had braved Baal's revenge, their champion and deliverer from the yoke of the Midianites. The spirit of patriotism waxed strong upon the renunciation of idolatry. It was an instance of childlike confidence in that "mighty man of valor" when his faith was weak to turn at once to the Lord for a new revelation. It pleased the Lord to accommodate himself to Gideon's infirmity, and allow him again to prove his promise to give him triumph over the Midianites. A certainty that he was moving in divine order enabled Gideon to think less of the difficulties he should meet in the management of his undertaking. Israel's weakness could not cause failure with God. He was set for the accomplishment of the divine purpose.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Nothing succeeds like success (v. 11). Booker T. Washington in, "Up from Slavery," remarks that among the colored people of the South when they would be at work in the fields and the sun waxed warm and the cotton rows seemed to become interminable, it was not uncommon for a man to throw down his hoe and say, "I'se got a call to preach." A desire to escape work and to find an easy job constituted a call. This idea is far too prevalent. Many spend their time dreaming of the hour when their "chance will come." But God's invariable rule of promotion is, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke 16:10). Work, however lowly, is honorable, and God has promised no blessings to the sluggard or drone. It was when Moses was faithful as a keeper of sheep that he was made shepherd of God's flock. It was when Joseph had been proved master of himself that he became master of a nation. It was while Peter and Andrew were casting their nets into the sea and while James and John were mending theirs that the call came to become fishers of men. So, it was while Gideon was busy thrashing wheat that the call came to defeat the enemies of his people. The Lord can gain the attention of his busy servants.

Be sure you are right. This whole narrative plainly teaches there should be a wholesome fear of going ahead of our divine leader. If every impression and imaginary leading of the professed followers of the Master had been as fully proved as was Gideon's, the church in all ages would have been saved from much blighting fanaticism. And how patient and considerate the Lord is with those who are conscientiously proving the mind of the Spirit. More than one modern, orthodox Boanerges would have had Gideon excommunicated and consigned to the ecclesiastical boneyard before sunset for his apparent doubting and seeming stubbornness. The graciousness of Jehovah attends the honest inquirer until every misgiving has been banished, and, with a "strength as of ten" because his heart had been purified of weakening doubt, he rose up early in the morning (ch. 7:1) to move against a host which was as grasshoppers for multitude (ch. 6:5). Oh, brother! God will never chide you for testing what is that "good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God," but, once proved, the vision will not tarry, for the King's business requires haste.

The dew-soaked fleece (v. 38). As Dr. Fuller observes, "Heaven's real miracles will endure turning, being inside and outside both alike." The small, insignificant fleece, like a speck on that great plain, was Gideon, the least of his father's family, in the midst of that great people. But as the dew found that single fleece, soaking it with moisture, so God would be as the dew unto Gideon, giving him the empowering of his Spirit for his great work. The second fall of dew was on all the land, so Gideon, Spirit-filled and heaven-equipped for his work, was the channel through which blessing and liberty came to the people. Sermons, testimonies and prayers which are not saturated with the dew of the Spirit, will only increase the death about us. It is not a question of small importance whether or not we are filled with the Spirit. It means much both to ourselves and to the world to have the Spirit's anointing upon us. With it, we shall minister life to those about us; without it, we minister death. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—We should hear God's call and obey it.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

ISRAEL IN DISTRESS

GIDEON { WAS CALLED / OBEYED THE LORD / WAS SURE

Israel in distress. Review the stories of Israel's deliverances from their former oppressors. Let the thought be kept prominent that it was through their sins that the nation was brought into trouble again. God showed his displeasure with Israel's sinning by letting enemies come in and conquer and rob them. God shows his displeasure to-day with those who are sinful by troubling their consciences and letting them have sad and heavy hearts, and sometimes by letting them have losses and suffering. The way to have light hearts and to live joyful lives is to give our hearts to Jesus and serve him all the time. The nation was now in trouble. Tell the story of the great multitudes of Midianites, Amalekites, and children of the East who came into Canaan and robbed the people of nearly everything they had. Draw a word picture of the people of Israel hiding in the dens and caves of the mountains to get away from the Midianites. They could not sow their fields with grain with the expectation of reaping the harvest.

Gideon called. Would the children suggest what the Israelites ought to do when they were in such deep distress? Lead them to see that Israel ought to pray, confessing their sins and calling on God for help. They did this and the Lord sent a prophet to teach them what to do, and then he sent some one to take the lead in overcoming Israel's enemies. Draw a word picture of Gideon beating grain out of the straw in a little place where he thought the Midianites would not find him and take away what he had. Tell about the angel's coming to him and telling him what he wanted him to do. Recall Gideon's invitation to the angel to stay with him until he had prepared a meal for him, and what took place when it was ready and placed upon a rock. The fire came out of the rock and burned the food. This was a sign to Gideon that the Lord was calling him.

Gideon was obedient. There was an altar of Baal near where Gideon lived, and the Lord told him to tear it down and build an altar to the true God and offer a sacrifice upon it. Tell how carefully he obeyed the Lord. It made the worshipers of Baal angry, but Gideon was not afraid of Baal or of those who served him. Here is a lesson in obedience to God.

Gideon was made sure. Show how great was the task before Gideon. There were not many warriors to go with him to battle against the hosts of the Midianites, and Gideon wished to have further proof from the Lord that he had called him and would be with him. The story of the two tests with the fleece of wool will be interesting to the children and will make an impression upon their minds. The Lord heard Gideon's prayer. After the plainness of the two tests Gideon could not doubt that God had called him to deliver Israel.

LESSON IV

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Jan. 18.—Gideon and the three hundred.—Judges 7:1-8. Tu.—Defeat of Midian.—Judges 7:9-23. Wed.—Gideon refuses to be king.—Judges 8:22-28. Th.—Israel's folly.—Judges 9:7-21. Fr.—Death of a wicked king.—Judges 9:41-57. Sat.—Sin and repentance.—Judges 10:6-16. Su.—A foolish vow.—Judges 11:29-40.

Gideon and the Three Hundred.—Judges 7: 1-25. Print 7: 1-7, 16-23.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verse, 7)

SUPT.—1 Then Jer-ub-ba'al, who is Gid'e-on, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Har'od: so that the host of the Mid'i-a-nites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Mo'reh, in the valley.

School.—2 And the Lord said unto Gid'e-on, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Mid'i-a-nites into their hands, lest Is'ra-el vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gil'e-ad. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

4 And the Lord said unto Gid'e-on, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gid'e-on, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

7 And the Lord said unto Gid'e-on, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Mid'i-a-nites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.

16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.

17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do.

18 When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, The sword of the Lord, and of Gid'e-on.

19 So Gid'e-on, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands.

20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow withal: and they cried, The sword of the Lord, and of Gid'e-on.

21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.

22 And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Beth-shit'tah in Zer'e-rath, and to the border of A-bel-me-ho'lah, unto Tab'bath.

23 And the men of Is'ra-el gathered themselves together out of Naph'ta-li, and out of Ash'er, and out of all Ma-nas'seh, and pursued after the Mid'i-a-nites.

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1 Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and encamped beside the spring of Harod: and the camp of Midian was on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. 3 Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and trembling, let him return and depart from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

4 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. 5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and Jehovah said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. 6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. 7 And Jehovah said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thy hand; and let all the people go every man unto his place.

16 And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers. 17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outermost part of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. 18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon.

19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands. 20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands wherewith to blow; and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon. 21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran; and they shouted, and put them to flight. 22 And they blew the three hundred trumpets, and Jehovah set every man's sword against his fellow, and against all the host; and the host fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath. 23 And the men of Israel were gathered together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after Midian.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Zech. 4: 6.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**It is through the power of God that his people triumph.**

TOPIC.—**Divinely ordained tests.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Gideon's army. II. Gideon encouraged. III. The attack. IV. The victory.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1250.**

PLACE.—**Plain of Jezreel.**

INTRODUCTION.—The entire history of Gideon and his work breathes forth a spirit of confidence in God's power. Israel was taught the lesson that only through the divine favor could they expect to prosper and have victory over their enemies. It was through God's mercy that their cry in the time of their distress was heard. It was well for Israel that a man of God lived among them, upon whom the Lord could lay his hand and make him his agent in their deliverance. The Lord entrusted his servant with a great responsibility, and that responsibility was borne in humility and faith. Gideon's name became enrolled in the list of Old Testament worthies.

COMMENTARY.—I. GIDEON'S ARMY (vs. 1-7). **1. well of Harod**—A fountain on the northern side of Mount Gilboa. From it flows a stream of considerable size. **hill of Moreh**—It is thought Little Hermon is the hill meant, which is across the valley from Mount Gilboa. The thirty-two thousand Israelites were encamped on the north side of Mount Gilboa and the one hundred thirty-five thousand Midianites were encamped to the north toward the hill of Moreh. **2. vaunt themselves against me**—The Lord saw the pride of heart of Israel and knew their disposition to neglect or forsake him. **mine own hand**—Even if there were only the small army of Israel arrayed against more than four times as many Midianites, and the former should be victorious, they would not recognize God's hand in the victory. **3. fearful and afraid**—In Deut. 20:1-8 several directions are given with regard to going out to war, and in one it is provided that the "fearful and fainthearted" shall return home. **4. yet too many**—The Lord purposed to show the people that the victory to be achieved would not come through human might. **unto the water**—The fountain of Harod and the stream flowing from it. **this shall go....this shall not go**—Another test was ordered which would further reduce the number in the army. **5. lappeth of the water**—From the following verse it is learned that this expression means to drink by bringing water with the hand to the mouth, as a dog conveys water into its mouth with its tongue. **boweth down**—To kneel or lie down to bring the mouth to the water, and thus to drink. **6. three hundred**—A small number drank by lapping the water. **7. by the three hundred men that lapped will I save you**—It is maintained that the men who drank by lapping the water with their hands were more fully on their guard than those who bowed down to drink. They were standing and could keep their eyes on the enemy, and thus avoid being taken unawares. This test, however, may have been employed because the Lord knew that the greater number would drink in the convenient way of bowing down, and a very few would drink by lapping, and thus the number would be reduced to exactly the desired proportions. **every man unto his place**—The three hundred had stood the two tests and were proved to be both brave and watchful. The others were sent to their tents, but the three hundred were retained as Gideon's army in marked contrast to the "host of Midian" in the valley.

II. GIDEON ENCOURAGED (vs. 9-15). To give Gideon further encouragement the Lord arranged it so that he would hear a dream told by one of the men in the Midianite army, and its interpretation. The man dreamed that a cake of barley bread fell or rolled into the camp of the Midianites. It struck a tent and knocked it down, so that it fell flat on the ground. The man to whom he told the dream said, "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host." This interpretation showed that the Lord had inspired fear into the hearts of the Midianites.

III. THE ATTACK (vs. 16-20). **16. into three companies**—This was probably done that an approach to the camp of Midian might be made at several points at the same time. **a trumpet in every man's hand**—Trumpets and torches were usually carried by the leaders of the army and not by common soldiers; in this case each soldier was supplied with them. **empty pitchers**—Earthenware vessels such as were used for carrying water. They were to conceal the lighted torches. **lamps**—Torches. **17. look on me**—Gideon was the leader and his men were to carry out his plan fully and carefully. **18. on every side of all the camp**—The contemplated attack would bring terror, as it would appear that the Midianites were wholly surrounded. **the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon**—"For Jehovah and for Gideon."—*R. V.* **19. beginning of the middle watch**—It was about midnight. The night was divided into three watches, the evening, the middle and the morning. **20. brake the pitchers**—The sound of the breaking of three hundred pitchers at once would seem like a great clash of arms. **the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon**—This cry from three hundred men of war, accompanied by the sounding of three hundred trumpets, the breaking of as many pitchers and the glare of as many torches at midnight were sufficient to strike terror to the hearts of the enemy.

IV. THE VICTORY (vs. 21-25). **21. every man in his place round about the camp**—To each of Gideon's three hundred men a work was assigned, and each did it. They were to sound their trumpets, hold up their lights and shout. As they did their part, the Lord did his, and victory was certain. **the host ran, and cried, and fled**—The Midianites were terror-stricken and in utter confusion. **22. every man's sword against his fellow**—This was the Lord's doing. The Midianites mistook their fellows for enemies and turned their weapons upon one another. They fled with the hope of making their escape. There seems to have been no thought of making a stand to fight Israel. **Beth-shittah....Abel-meholah**—The location of these places is uncertain. It is quite evident they were east of Jezreel, toward the Jordan. **23. men of Israel....pursued**—Men from the various tribes were hastily summoned and joined in the destruction of their enemies. **24, 25.** The men of Ephraim were called upon to take the region along the Jordan and head off the Midianites from making their escape. We do not hear of the Midianites again in history.

QUESTIONS.—Describe Gideon's call. How did the number in Gideon's army compare with that of the Midianites? What was the first test applied to Gideon's army? Describe the second test. Why did the Lord desire to reduce the number of men? What encouragement came to Gideon? Describe the equipment of Gideon's men. How was the attack made upon the camp of the Midianites? Describe the result.

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The connection between the preceding lesson and this. 2. The qualities in Gideon that fitted him for leadership. 3. The outlook from a human standpoint. 4. The battle which Israel fought successfully against Amalek in Rephidim (Exod. 17:10). 5. Past deliverances that should have encouraged Israel to trust in the Lord for present victory.

II. THEME.—God's way of working.

III. A PREPARED ARMY.—1. Warriors came in response to Gideon's call. 2. God would have been pleased if there had been no war and no occasion for it. 3. The size of Gideon's army at first. 4. The reason why it was too large. 5. Reduced from thirty-two thousand to ten thousand. 6. The second test. (1) Its significance. (2) Its effect. 7. The equipment for the three hundred. (1) Trumpets. (2) Pitchers. (3) Lamps. The significance of each.

IV. A DISCOURAGED ENEMY.—1. The size of the Midianitish army (Judges 8:10). 2. God's command to Gideon to go to the camp of Midian. 3. The Midianite's dream. 4. The dream interpreted. 5. The effect on Gideon of the dream and its interpretation. 6. Terror inspired in the hearts of Israel's enemy in preparation for the ensuing attack.

V. A SUCCESSFUL ATTACK.—1. The three hundred divided into three companies. 2. Gideon's directions to them before the attack. 3. Gideon the capable and recognized leader. 4. The attack was made about midnight, when it was not expected. 5. The fourfold occasion for confusion. (1) The trumpet blasts. (2) The crashing of the pitchers. (3) The flashing of the lights. (4) The victorious shouts of three hundred men. 6. The appearance of being surrounded by a great army. 7. Enemies destroying themselves. 8. The call for troops to head off the fleeing Midianites. 9. A great victory with permanent results. 10. Faith and victory.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**Divinely ordained tests.**

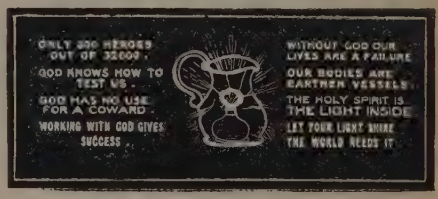
I. Enjoined upon the army of Israel.
II. Effective against the Midianites.

I. Enjoined upon the army of Israel. God called Gideon to success. The reduction of external means was God's way of giving success. Everything was in apparent readiness when two mysterious tests were enjoined, first, to check the unbelief and self-conceit of men and to secure efficiency, by a trial of courage and discipline of faith and inspiration. The army was reduced to its effective strength, not extensive, but intensive. The second test revealed the presence or absence of the rarer qualities. Gideon's faith was sorely tried on the eve of battle, but we have no complaint from him. Before God's clear command all his natural feelings and wishes gave way at once. His faith prompted him to obey at whatever sacrifice of inclination or desire. Alone of all that host he had borne the responsibility of reducing it to three hundred. He looked with a single eye to the will of God and took no count of consequences to himself or others. He set the word and promise of God on one side and all the fearful risks and dangers on the other, when he had taken due care and caution in verifying the word of God. Abundant assurance was given to him that the very word of God was his warrant for what he did. Divine wisdom was afterward seen in the selection of the three hundred. It was that God's power might be recognized in the victory. The soldiers did not know that they were determining their fate when they drank, but that little incident revealed their characters.

II. Effective against the Midianites. Belief in the victory of Jehovah was all important with Gideon since he had received direct and distinct assurance that in the coming battle he should be triumphant; yet he needed the conviction that in the impending conflict numbers would count for nothing. In a singular and grotesque style the dream of the barley cake with its interpretation taught him exactly that fact. In it we see an exquisite adaptation of divine revelation to human requirements. The heathen arrayed against him unwittingly proved to be his timely stimulus. It was necessary for Gideon to be well aware of the facts, to know fully the nature of the opposition. Hearing from his enemies the promise of victory, Gideon hastened back to his camp filled with reverence and joy to prepare for an immediate attack. His scheme was simple, quaint and ingenious. His profound trust in God gave character to his plans. His strategy is one of the military marvels of antiquity. A great end was reached by most insignificant instrumentality. Never did means appear more contemptible than those employed by Gideon. The result proved their efficiency, yet what served at that juncture would have been utterly useless at another time. Gideon's victory was a triumph of thought and of contrivance, a victory God-given and complete. The Israelites stood every man in his place while fear and suspicion did the work. Gideon conquered before he struck a blow. The dismay he created and the confusion thus produced in the hostile camp secured him victory. Darkness and ignorance made the Midianites their own worst enemy. There was a strange power in Israel's battle-cry, but there was no blasphemy in it. By it Gideon's army made humble recognition of the fact that God had taken Gideon into his service and into joint possession of the sword with which Gideon fought. Israel realized that the battle they had to fight was the Lord's and not their own. They stood in unity, courage and faith, the finite in cooperation with the Infinite. The far-stretching encampment of the Midianites was, to all appearances, organized for defense at every point while Israel was, in their estimation, a defeated, famished people whose life had been almost crushed. That one fact which had become known to the Midianites, of Israel's return to Jehovah, shaped into the dream of one man and the interpretation of it expressed the cause of trembling which spread through the hostile host. For days and nights the retreat of the Midianites went on until the strange, swift triumph of Israel was assured.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Quality, not quantity (v. 2). Bulk is not necessarily strength. Number is not always power. Thomas Fuller said that after Gideon's test, there "were fewer persons, but not fewer men." General McClellan was one of the ablest generals in the civil war, as far as the knowledge of tactics was concerned. When placed in command of the Army of the Potomac, he spent months accumulating soldiers, cannon and supplies. He bombarded Washington with appeals for more men. This continued until the great bulk of his massive fighting machine was its weakness. But God never complains of having too few with whom to work. One "shall chase a thousand." One, with God, is a majority. A she-wolf was passing through a forest with her six whelps when she met a lioness with one lone cub. Looking with pride on her large family, she said to the lioness, "See, I have six, and you have but one." "True," replied the lioness, "but my one is a lion." "The work of the world has always been done by the few; inspiration was held by the few; wealth is held by the few; poetry is put into the custody of but few; wisdom is guarded in her temple by but few; the few saved the world; ten men would have saved the cities of the plain; Potiphar's house is blessed because of Joseph; and that ship tossed and torn upon the billows of the Adriatic shall be saved because there is an apostle of Christ on board."

The character test (v. 5). Vicious or pure, blood will tell. Murder will out. There is no sham or pretense in a picture taken when the subject is ignorant of what is going on. When we are not on dress parade, we act out what we are. It is very evident the ten thousand were unconscious of the fact that they were being tested again. Hence, it was a true character test. 1. The three hundred proved they had learned self-control. Hot and thirsty, though they were, they could abstain from an indulgence that would have been ruinous. "The cause of God had stilled the voice of appetite." 2. The three hundred had learned to put duty before pleasure. Nine thousand seven hundred men thought only of their own comfort, and of satisfying the desires of the flesh. It is only those who "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts" who become efficient soldiers for Christ. 3. The three hundred were determined and thoughtful men. They had counted the cost. Their eyes were on the enemy. They would not be taken by surprise. They were on their guard. They would be in a hurry. No time was lost prostrating themselves by the brook. By the time their thoughtless brethren were prostrate by the water, they were on the other side ready for duty.

The contagion of fear (v. 21). Fear spreads like wild-fire and leads to panic and frenzied confusion. A man put his head in at the door of a large hall in northern Michigan where Christmas exercises were going on and cried "fire." In the panic that followed a number of boys, girls, men and women were killed. The work of the church is often hindered by the fearful and timid. God says, "Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed" (Josh. 1:9). It is supposed that soldiers are brave men and are not easily frightened. Their duty is to obey orders, to keep calm and to resist the enemy. However, when the Lord puts forth his hand to oppose them, they are as capable of being frightened as are other classes of people.

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—God helps those who trust and obey him.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

GIDEON { WITH A SMALL ARMY / HAD FAITH AND COURAGE / WON A GREAT VICTORY

The story of Gideon. Tell the children about "The Gideons." They are an organization of Christian traveling men. Their business calls them to be away from home much of the time, and they are on the road and at hotels day after day and week after week. They are determined to live religion wherever they are. They call themselves "The Gideons" because they like the name. Let the class give some reasons why they think these Christian traveling men chose this name. Let the children tell you why they like the story of Gideon. Bring out the noble traits of his character. Tell how the Lord honored him by having his name enrolled among the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11.

Gideon's army. Have the children think of the size of the city in which they live or one near by, and then compare the number of people in it with the number in Gideon's army at first. Thirty-two thousand men would make quite an army, but the army of the Midianites was larger than four armies of the size that Gideon had. Tell how his army was reduced from thirty-two thousand to ten thousand, and then from ten thousand to three hundred. Explain why the Lord wished Gideon to have such a small army as that to fight against an army four hundred fifty times as large. Let the class tell you what kind of equipment the three hundred in Gideon's army had, and compare it with the armor that the Midianites had. The weapons carried by Gideon's army would not seem destructive.

Gideon's faith and courage. Ask the question why Gideon dared to go out with three hundred men to attack the great army of the Midianites, and place the answers on the board. God called him to the work. Gideon had faith in God. He was a strong man. He had great courage. God told him how to prepare the army, and when and how to make the attack. Recall the assurances Gideon had that the Lord was leading him. Recall the story of Moses' work in leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, taking them right away from their masters.

A great victory. Draw an outline on the board of the camp of Midian. Then place three short lines at three points about it, to represent the three hundred men of Gideon's army. Describe the effect upon the sleeping host of Midian when three hundred trumpets sounded out and three hundred large pitchers were broken and three hundred torches flashed out and three hundred men shouted aloud. Tell the story of the Midianite's dream to show how much afraid the people were of the Israelites. Let the class tell how great was the victory the army of Gideon obtained over the Midianites. They never troubled Israel after that. It was faith in God that brought the victory. What enemies are there for the children to overcome? Let them tell, and teach them that the Lord will help them to conquer.

LESSON V

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Jan. 25.—The birth of Samson.—Judges 13:8-16, 24, 25. Tu.—Wine forbidden the Nazarite.—Num. 6:1-12. Wed.—Faithfulness of the Rechabites.—Jer. 35:1-11. Th.—Obedience and its reward.—Jer. 35:12-19. Fr.—Drunkenness condemned.—Isa. 28:1-13. Sat.—Self-denial for sake of others.—1 Cor. 8:1-13. Su.—Walk in the Spirit.—Gal. 5:13-24.

The Birth of Samson—Temperance Lesson.—Judges 13: 8-16, 24, 25.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 12-14)

SUPT.—8 Then Ma no'ah intreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.

School.—9 And God hearkened to the voice of Ma-no'ah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Ma-no'ah her husband was not with her.

10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day.

11 And Ma-no'ah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am.

12 And Ma-no'ah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him?

13 And the angel of the Lord said unto Ma-no'ah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware.

14 She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe.

15 And Ma-no'ah said unto the angel of the Lord, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.

16 And the angel of the Lord said unto Ma-no'ah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord. For Ma-no'ah knew not that he was an angel of the Lord.

24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Sam'son: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.

25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zor'ah and Esh'ta-ol.

*AMERICAN REVISION

8 Then Manoah entreated Jehovah, and said, Oh, Lord, I pray thee, let the man of God whom thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. 9 And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. 10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and told her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day. 11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. 12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass: what shall be the ordering of the child, and how shall we do unto him? 13 And the angel of Jehovah said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. 14 She may not eat of anything that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; all that I commanded her let her observe.

15 And Manoah said unto the angel of Jehovah, I pray thee, let us detain thee, that we may make ready a kid for thee. 16 And the angel of Jehovah said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt make ready a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto Jehovah. For Manoah knew not that he was the angel of Jehovah.

24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and Jehovah blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of Jehovah began to move him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink. Judges 13:4.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**Strong drink is injurious to soul and body.**

TOPIC.—**Parenthood.**

OUTLINE.—**I. A heavenly visitor. II. Instructions given. III. A sacrifice offered. IV. Samson, the deliverer.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1155.**

PLACE.—**Zorah, in the tribe of Dan, Samson's birthplace.**

INTRODUCTION.—After the death of Gideon the Israelites relapsed into idolatry, and various enemies rose up to oppress them. Abimelech, the son of Gideon, desired to become king, and succeeded in destroying all his brothers except Jotham. He was acknowledged king by the people of Shechem. His life ended disastrously. A succession of judges was raised up for the defense of Israel. Among them were Tola, Jair and Jephthah. The Philistines came to be Israel's most powerful enemy. They occupied the western portion of Canaan, holding the rich plain along the Mediterranean. In this time of distress the Lord raised up Samson to be a judge in Israel. His work was local, being confined to the western part of Canaan. His career was different from that of any other Bible character. He was fearless and powerful. He undertook great exploits and succeeded. He fought always on the right side, although he was not free from yielding to temptation. The Lord used him for the partial deliverance of his people from the Philistines. The three chapters following the present lesson detail his exploits and set forth his weaknesses. The present lesson presents to us an example of the working out of the Nazarite vow. It is a strong setting forth of the total abstinence principle, and is therefore emphatically a temperance lesson.

COMMENTARY.—I. A HEAVENLY VISITOR (VS. 8-11). **8. Manoah**—Manoah's home was at Zorah, a place in the southeastern part of the tribe of Dan. This region was exposed to the ravages of the hostile Philistines, and it was here that the man was to be born who would use his great powers to harass this enemy of Israel. **intreated the Lord**—Manoah was a man of prayer and of faith. **let the man of God....come again**—A reading of the first seven verses of this chapter will give the explanation of the facts mentioned regarding a former visit. **teach us what we shall do**—Manoah and his wife believed what the angel of the Lord had said about a child being born to them, and they desired to know particularly what to do in the training of the child. The piety of Manoah is indicated by his prayer and in his interest in properly caring for the child that was promised. **9. God hark-**

ened—Although the Lord had given specific directions to Manoah's wife, he listened to Manoah's prayer and answered it, thus repeating the promise and instructions. **the angel of God**—We have repeated instances in the Old Testament of visits of divine messengers to men. This messenger was clearly Deity manifested in human form. **as she sat in the field**—Pausing to rest, perhaps, as she was going or returning from some fountain to draw water. Dr. Robinson observed near the fountain of Zorah several women, "toiling upward toward the village, each with her jar of water on her head. The village, the fountain, the fields, the mountains, and the females bearing water, all," says he, "transported us back to ancient times, when in all probability the mother of Samson often in like manner visited the fountain, and toiled homeward with her jar of water."—*Whedon.*

10. the woman made haste—She evidently knew that her husband desired to see the one who had before appeared to her and made her the promise of a child. She went hastily to call him to come and see him. **shewed her husband**—Told her husband. **11. Manoah arose, and went**—He had prayed that the messenger might come again, and now that his prayer was being answered, he went to him, doing his part toward answering the prayer. **art thou the man**—Manoah wished to be fully convinced that there was no mistake, for the matter under consideration was very important, therefore he asked this direct question. "Manoah's intense desire for the repetition of the angel's visit was prompted not by doubts or anxieties of any kind, but was the fruit of a lively faith, and of his great anxiety to follow out the instructions given."—*J., F. & B.* He came to be fully convinced that he was face to face with a messenger from God, with one who had authority.

II. INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN (vs. 12-14). **12. now let thy words come to pass**—Some render this clause, "Now thy words shall come to pass." There is a close connection between this expression and the question which follows, as if Manoah had said, "Now that it is coming to pass, how shall we," etc. **what shall be the ordering of the child** (*R. V.*)—Manoah was anxious to know how to meet the great responsibility that was being placed upon him and his wife. The angel of the Lord had told his wife that he that was to be born of her and her husband should "begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines," hence he was to be an important personage. Manoah believed that unusual care and training should be given. He wished to hear for himself the directions that had already been given. **13. the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah**—As the Lord had heard Manoah's prayer for a second visit of the heavenly visitor, so he heeded his request for a second statement of directions about the child. **of all that I said....let her beware**—There was no new instruction to be given, and no instructions that she had received were to be neglected. While the directions which God has given in his word and gives by his Spirit are of great importance, many treat them with indifference.

14. cometh of the vine—Directions for carrying out of the vow of a Nazarite are given in Num. 6:1-21. In verse 3 of that passage it is said that he who takes the vow "shall separate himself from wine and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried." The mother in this case was required to observe strictly the Nazarite vow until her child was born, for it was foretold and commanded that he should be a Nazarite from his birth. **neither let her drink wine or strong drink**—The Hebrew "yain," the Greek "oinos," our wine, are the same word. It is connected with a root signifying to ferment, from whence also comes "yawen," mud. The "shecar," or strong drink, seems to have been distilled from corn, honey or dates. From it is derived the verb "shacar," to be drunk.—*Cam. Bib.* The use of intoxicating liquors is thus declared in the scriptures to be harmful and is again and again forbidden. **nor eat any unclean thing**—She must observe the law of Moses carefully with respect to the kinds of food that were forbidden. **all that I commanded her**—The record of these commands is in verses 4 and 5 of this chapter.

III. A SACRIFICE OFFERED (vs. 15, 16). **15. let us detain thee**—With true Oriental hospitality Manoah urged the messenger to remain and eat of the meal he would prepare for him. He was earnest in his request, especially because the mission to him was of great importance and had brought great joy to him and his wife; for they had no children. **16. I will not eat of thy bread**—Manoah did not know that it was the angel of the Lord to whom he offered food. This statement of the angel's turned Manoah from his purpose to offer him food. **offer it unto the Lord**—This language evidently suggested to Manoah the propriety of making an offering to the Lord. The angel in this remark did not deny his divinity. Manoah went forward and made a sacrifice to God after asking the angel his name. The angel said, "Wherefore askest thou after my name, seeing it is wonderful?" (v. 18, *R. V.*). Some writers think that fire came miraculously and consumed the sacrifice. The angel went up toward heaven in the flame of the burning sacrifice and Manoah and his wife looked on in amazement. They fell on their faces. Manoah thought they had seen God and was afraid. His wife answered Manoah's remark in the clear and logical reasoning of verse 23.

IV. SAMSON, THE DELIVERER (vs. 24, 25). **24. called his name Samson**—The name signifies, according to Josephus, one that is strong. Some have doubted this signification, because the root "shemesh" means the sun; but Fuerst shows that from the sense of being bright, shining, comes easily the metaphorical sense of being distinguished, strong. Hence the name means a distinguished hero.—*Whedon.* **the Lord blessed him**—Samson was a child of promise and was given for a special work. The Lord endowed him with those peculiar powers that he could use in the work for which he had raised him up. **25. the Spirit of the Lord began to move him**—He began to realize his strength, and it would appear that there was unfolded to him the nature of the task which lay before him.

QUESTIONS.—What powerful enemy was oppressing Israel? To what tribe of Israel did Manoah belong? What message came to Manoah's wife? What prayer did Manoah offer to God? Describe the answer of the prayer. Who was the angel of the Lord? What question did Manoah ask the angel? What was Manoah's wife forbidden to eat or drink? What are the effects of the use of strong drink? Describe the offering that Manoah made to the Lord. What was the son of Manoah and his wife named? For what purpose was he raised up? When did he begin to realize his strength?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. Qualities in Gideon that we might well desire to possess. 2. The length of time between Gideon's victory over the Midianites and Samson's birth. 3. The list of judges during this time. 4. The enemies who were oppressing the nation. 5. The repeated departures of Israel from God.

II. THEME.—A promised deliverer.

III. A HEAVENLY MESSENGER.—1. God gave Israel over to the power of the Philistines for forty years because of their sins. 2. The region occupied by the Philistines. 3. During this troublous period the angel of the Lord appeared to the wife of Manoah. 4. A divine personage. 5. The promise included in the message. 6. The instructions given to Manoah's wife. 7. The child promised to this pair was to be a Nazarite. 8. The vows of a Nazarite. 9. Manoah's devotion to God indicated by his prayer.

IV. A SACRIFICE OFFERED.—1. Manoah's hospitality shown by his invitation to the angel to eat before going away. 2. The angel's reply. 3. The angel of the Lord gave a faint indication of his character. 4. The sacrifice offered to the Lord. 5. The departure of the angel of the Lord. 6. The effect upon Manoah and his wife. 7. Manoah's reverence.

V. SAMSON, THE DELIVERER.—1. Samson was the name given to the little child of Manoah and his wife. 2. The meaning of the name. 3. The child's development. 4. The blessing of the Lord upon Samson meant health of body and soul. 5. The influence of the Spirit upon him. 6. Being prepared for his work.

VI. TEMPERANCE TRUTHS.—1. The effects of strong drink upon the individual. (1) Physically. (2) Mentally. (3) Socially. (4) Financially. (5) Spiritually. 2. The effects upon the drinker's family and friends. 3. The effects upon the drinker's descendants. 4. The drink problem is a moral one, but is also a problem for the state and nation to consider.

Practical Survey

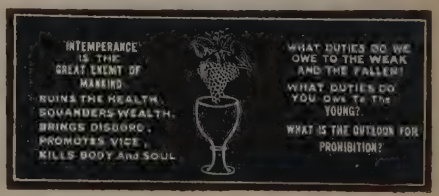
TOPIC.—**Parenthood.**

I. Under divine guidance.
II. Its national importance.

I. Under divine guidance. In the marvelous ordering of divine providence nothing is more calculated to lift human life into its highest ranges of experiences than parenthood. It brings a new dignity, the sense of which connects the task of those who have it, with the creative energy of God. The tide of life is felt to rise as the new office and the new responsibility are grasped. It is the coronation of life, and the child, drawing father and mother to itself, is rightly the object of keenest interest and most tender care. In more than one story of the Bible the motherhood of a simple peasant woman gave rise to divine communications and supernatural hopes. Manoah's wife was a true interpreter of the divine thought. She was a woman with a great soul and a large heart to whom God was a reality. She had a great longing for the deliverance of Israel, for something heroic in history in which God would vindicate his might and grandeur above the heathen gods. Without hesitation the angel of Jehovah spoke to her in the field. Her bright hopefulness rested on a solid foundation. She stated her case to Manoah with wonderful simplicity and clearness, giving three reasons for her consolatory assurance of deliverance from death, namely, accepted sacrifices, gracious revelations and precious promises. The answer to many a prayer of hope was coming and in their own home the hero was to be cradled. Conscious of ignorance and inexperience, and feeling the weight of responsibility, Manoah and his wife desired to have authoritative direction in their duty. They magnified their humility, faith and devotion in their prayer for guidance. Here were two Hebrew peasants living in a period of Philistine domination more than a thousand years before the Christian era. The child that was to be born, a gift of God, a divine charge, was promised to these parents. The gift was made in a very solemn manner and under the express condition that he was to be trained to live, not for himself or his family alone, but for God, to whom he was consecrated at his earliest existence. That consecration of his life to God his parents deeply impressed on his mind and taught him as they could the worship of the unseen Jehovah in the sacrifices at the altar, in prayer for protection and prosperity. So much was involved in the duty of his mother that she was divinely instructed as to her own manner of life.

II. Its national importance. In a very special sense this child was a gift to his nation. Samson's lot in life fell upon a period of utter national demoralization, but he was born to a woman who longed for a boy, and to her son she transmitted her hope, her faith and her enthusiasm. Israel had lapsed into subjection to the despised Philistines. All national spirit was dying out and the prestige of Jehovah was giving way to the prestige of Dagon. Samson was to be a first instrument in the deliverance of Israel, and because of that fact parental anxiety was deepened as to their part in his training, both in instruction and government for mind and body. Circumstances must be understood that discipline might fit the young life for its place. His radiant health and uncommon physical energy, even in boyhood, were to himself and others the sign of a divine blessing, which maintained his sense of consecration. Samson needed extraordinary gifts for extraordinary work. He had to subdue the Philistines and reanimate the courage of the Hebrews. Samson was a sign to Israel. His life was a sort of parable exhibiting in a strange but striking form what would have been Israel's experience if they had been faithful. Like the nation of Israel Samson was consecrated to God. The remarkable thing in his life was that, while he continued faithful in his consecration, he possessed wonderful bodily strength, but the moment the Nazarite vow was broken he became weak as other men. The nation was taught symbolically what wonderful strength would be theirs if they would be faithful to their covenant with Jehovah. T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Ancient eugenics. "She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe" (v. 14). The modern doctrine of eugenics is exceedingly ancient. The plans and provisions for the betterment of race conditions in our times hark back to the days when God prescribed laws of hygiene, the observance of which gave to the world a nation of such vitality that it still maintains its identity and virility. But Samson's life is proof of the great truth that no matter how ideal prenatal conditions may be, sin remains. A recent authority suggests that human beings should be pedigreed the same as animals; but, however high the standard of physical perfection, the offspring of the best will still have the virus of sin. Samson was a child of promise, born under ideal conditions, bearing the blessing of the Lord, yet his life was marked by the most humiliating failures. There is also the suggestion that while there may be prohibition in the home, if the fruit of the vine is in the land, temptation remains, and the wreckage of manhood will be inevitable. World-wide prohibition should be the slogan. The world is awaking to the necessity of doing away with the terrible curse of drink.

Spasmodic blessings. "And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol" (v. 25). This describes the condition of far too many professed Christians. They are good by spells. They live a checkered life. Like a geyser, they spout with tremendous force for a little while, then subside into a graveyard stillness which may last for months. There are certain minerals, which, after exposure to some degree of heat, will, when removed to a dark place, throw off a degree of light called phosphorescence. Phosphorescent professors of religion are the curse of the church to-day. Like Samson, their attention is turned toward the world and sinful indulgence, rather than toward constant obedience to their vows. Two boys were running a race in the snow. When they reached their destination, one boy said to the other, "I say, Harry, how is it that your footmarks are so uneven, while mine make one straight line to the mark?" "I will tell you how it is," answered Harry. "In the middle of our race I noticed a bird, and was trying to keep my eye on it to watch where it would go, instead of keeping my eyes on the goal." Is not that what so many professed followers of Christ are doing to-day? Instead of keeping their eyes fixed on the end of the race, they are taken up with the trifling things around them and so are making crooked paths. It is said that when a certain chief of an Irish clan came to be baptized, he held his right hand out of the water. He was asked what that meant. He said he wanted to withhold that from God's service so that he might war against his enemies. How many hold back part of their money, their time, their service or their influence, and then think God will accept the rest and give them his abiding presence! Samson failed to keep his vows continuously and so failed to have the permanent blessing of the Lord. Like Enoch of old, we are to "walk with God," if we would enjoy the rich fruitage of a permanent blessing. If we walk with God, the Spirit will move us mightily from time to time, and others will be conscious of God's presence with us. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—All should shun strong drink.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Temperance for { Parents / Children

Preliminary stories. Call out from the children the various incidents in the life of Gideon. Note the call that came to him when he was at work. Tell the story again of his tearing down a heathen altar and building one to the true God. Have the class tell about Gideon's large army and how it became a small one. The children will remember the arms with which the three hundred men were provided when they went out to meet the host of the Midianites. Let some one tell about the strange dream one of the Midianites had. Recall the way in which the three hundred threw the camp of the Midianites into confusion, and put the host to flight. Tell something of the trouble the Israelites brought upon themselves by their sins, and tell how the Lord raised up leaders to ward off their enemies. The Lord is able and willing to help us defeat our enemies.

Temperance for parents. Let the children tell you why fathers and mothers ought to be temperate. Some of them may know parents who are hard drinkers. There is danger of women becoming drunkards as well as men. Tell about the home of Manoah and his wife. They had no children. The angel of the Lord visited the wife of Manoah and gave her the promise that a child would come to her home. The angel also told her that she must not use wine or strong drink. If parents drink, their children are also likely to want drink too. A man said that his grandfather was a drinking man and he himself had such a craving for drink that he would not dare to take anything intoxicating, fearing that he might be overcome by the desire he had for it. Then if parents drink, their children are likely to follow their example. Some parents have been known to give their babies liquor.

Temperance for children. If fathers and mothers should abstain from strong drink, and if children should do the same, the people would all be temperate. One can not be as strong as he ought to be if he indulges in strong drink. Tobacco and other drugs also are injurious. There was trouble in the land of Israel. The Philistines were fighting against the Israelites, and the Lord wanted a strong man to drive them away. He gave Manoah and his wife a son, and gave directions that he should be temperate all the days of his life. He should not drink any strong drink. Samson was the name of this baby. He grew up to be exceedingly strong. Tell two or three stories about Samson to show how strong he was. None of us will be likely to become as strong as Samson was, but by refraining from liquor and tobacco we will become as strong as possible; then we can accomplish something in this world. Every child should be strongly set against drink, and he should be active in his opposition to the liquor traffic. There will be an opportunity to fight this great enemy of the church and nation.

LESSON VI

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Feb. 1.—Ruth chooses the true God.—Ruth 1:6-18. Tu.—The Israelites' choice.—Josh. 24:14-28. Wed.—Choice of faith.—Heb. 11:23-31. Th.—Solomon's choice.—1 Kings 3:4-15. Fr.—The nation's choice.—Zech. 8:14-23. Sat.—A life and death choice.—Deut. 30:11-20. Su.—The supreme choice.—Phil. 3:1-16.

Ruth Chooses the True God.—Ruth 1: 1-22. Print 1: 6-18.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 16, 17)

SUPT.—6 Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Mo'ab: for she had heard in the country of Mo'ab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.

School.—7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Ju'dah.

8 And Na'o-mi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

9 The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

11 And Na'o-mi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;

13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Or'pah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

18 When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

*AMERICAN REVISION

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that Jehovah had visited his people in giving them bread. 7 And she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. 8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house: Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. 9 Jehovah grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice, and wept. 10 And they said unto her, Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people. 11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? 12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should even have a husband to-night, and should also bear sons; 13 would ye therefore tarry till they were grown? would ye therefore stay from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes, for the hand of Jehovah is gone forth against me. 14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law. 16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; 17 where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. 18 And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Ruth 1:16.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**It is the highest wisdom to choose God and his people.**

TOPIC.—**True consecration.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Removal to Moab. II. The Return. III. Two choices. IV. Arrival at Bethlehem.**

TIME.—**Uncertain; perhaps about B. C. 1300.**

PLACES.—**Moab; Bethlehem.**

INTRODUCTION.—The Book of Ruth has been considered an appendix to the Book of Judges. It gives a story which sets forth, in some degree, conditions existing during the period of the judges. It tells of the family of Elimelech, who left Bethlehem because of a famine prevailing there, and went to live in Moab. Within ten years Elimelech and the two sons died, leaving Naomi, the wife and mother, alone with her two daughters-in-law. Through Ruth's choice and determination to return with Naomi, her mother-in-law, to Bethlehem, she has left us an example of love and devotion to God that has ever been an inspiration to God's people. Her determination to join herself to the people of God brought her into the family of Boaz, as his wife, and she became the mother of Obed, the father of Jesse, from whom sprang David and the whole line of Judah's kings. Of her descendants, the greatest, however, was Jesus. The authorship of this book is unknown. From the closing paragraph we would conclude that its author lived as late, at least, as the time of David. The present lesson includes Ruth's choice and her arrival in Bethlehem, but the whole book should be read.

COMMENTARY.—I. REMOVAL TO MOAB (vs. 1-5). We are not told at what time during the period of the judges Elimelech and his family left Canaan for Moab. It has been thought by many that it might have been during the years in which the Midianites were overrunning the land of Israel and robbing the people of their produce. There may have been a famine because of long-continued drought. It is clear, however, that scarcity of food led this family,

consisting of Elimelech, Naomi, his wife, and their sons, Mahlon and Chilion, to seek better conditions in the land of Moab. The ten years spent by Naomi there were full of distressing experiences. Her husband died. Her sons married women of Moab. Later the sons died, leaving her alone with her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. Jews are disposed to consider the afflictions that came to this family in the light of punishment, inflicted upon them for leaving the land of Israel and going into a heathen country, and for intermarrying with people of another race and religion. However this may be, we have the assurance that the Lord, by a peculiar train of providences, brought high honor to Ruth because of her choosing to live and die among God's people.

II. THE RETURN (vs. 6-10). **6. then she arose**—Naomi, after living in the land of Moab ten years, decided to return to her former home. This was Bethlehem, called Bethlehem-Judah, as it was in the territory of the tribe of Judah, distinguishing it from the Bethlehem in Zebulun. **the country of Moab**—This was a region forty or fifty miles from north to south, and twenty miles from east to west, lying east of the territory occupied by the tribes of Israel. **she had heard**—As there was not much intercourse between Israel and outside nations, it was probably some time after there came to be plenty in Israel before the news reached Naomi. **giving them bread**—Acknowledgment is here devoutly made to God for the prosperity that Israel was enjoying. **7. they went on the way to return**—Naomi and her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, set out together on the way to the land of Judah. Orpah and Ruth were going with Naomi to keep her company, for a part of the distance, out of respect and love for her. **8. Naomi said....Go, return**—The time had come, as Naomi thought, for them to part. She was leaving the place where her loved ones had died, and now she must bid her loving daughters-in-law farewell, to go on alone. She thought they would be better off to remain in their own land and among their own people than to go into the land of Israel, for she well knew the attitude of the Israelites toward people of other nations. **each to her mother's house**—To the mother is given the special care of the daughter. **the Lord deal kindly with you**—Naomi would dismiss her loved ones with an earnest and humble prayer. **as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me**—Naomi paid a high tribute in these words to the character and conduct of her daughters-in-law. She approved of their treatment of her sons and of herself.

9. that ye may find rest—To find rest is an Oriental form of expression for entering the marriage state. This state is in general the divine order for men and women, and they who are happily married are restful. **each of you in the house of her husband**—Naomi was making for Orpah and Ruth the best wish and prayer that she could frame. **then she kissed them**—She was leaving them forever, as she thought, and bade them an affectionate farewell. **lifted up their voice, and wept**—They thus expressed their grief at parting. **10. we will return with thee unto thy people**—Naomi's attempt to send her daughters-in-law back was apparently unsuccessful. Her life in Moab and her attitude and conduct toward them were such as to win them to herself. So greatly were they taken up with her that they would bid farewell to country and kindred rather than say good-by to her.

III. TWO CHOICES (vs. 11-18). **11. that they may be your husbands**—The Mosaic law required that if a man should die, leaving a wife and no child, the man's brother should marry her. In this connection and in allusion to the law just mentioned, Naomi reminded her daughters-in-law that she had no more sons who could be their husbands. **12. go your way**—She would persuade them to return to their respective homes, for there were better prospects for them there, as she viewed the situation, than in the land of Israel. **13. would ye stay for them from having husbands**—Naomi first sets forth an improbable supposition, and then makes the thought of Orpah and Ruth's marrying sons that she might yet bear, to appear ridiculous. **the hand of the Lord has gone out against me**—Naomi felt that the Lord was permitting severe affliction to come upon her in taking away her husband and her sons. **14. wept again**—The Orientals are demonstrative in their grief. This scene must have been a most impressive one. **Orpah kissed her mother in law**—The last sad kiss of a tearful separation; after which she, unlike Ruth, turned back to her people and her gods. The great deity of the Moabites was Chemosh (Num. 21:29; Judges 11:24). **Ruth clave unto her**—Ruth was not yet convinced that it was best for her to return, nor was she persuaded to do so. **15. return thou**—Naomi tried to use to advantage the argument that Orpah had gone back, therefore Ruth should go also.

16. intreat me not—Ruth's mind was made up. She had chosen to go with Naomi. Orpah might choose to return, but she was determined to go to the land of Israel. **whither thou goest, I will go**—There was no hesitancy on Ruth's part. She knew she was going among a strange people, but she also knew the course she had chosen was the right one. **thy people shall be my people**—Ruth severed forever her connection with her country and people, for she had found a better people and a better country. **thy God my God**—This was an expression of her determination to love and serve the true God alone. **17. there will I be buried**—The choice Ruth made was to be in force to the end of life. It was not an experiment with her. It meant everything to her to make the choice and she would never go back from what she had decided. **18. stedfastly minded**—Naomi was convinced that Ruth's choice was fully made and further argument and entreaty were useless, therefore she said no more against her going with her.

IV. ARRIVAL AT BETHLEHEM (vs. 19-22). The arrival of Naomi and Ruth in the city was soon generally known. The acquaintances of Naomi wondered if it were really she. She said, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara," for Naomi means pleasant, and Mara means bitter. She felt that the Lord had testified against her and had afflicted her. Their arrival was in the time of barley harvest, or in April. Ruth at once found profitable employment as a gleaner in the field of Boaz and later became his wife.

QUESTIONS.—Where is Moab? What family went from Bethlehem to Moab? What led them to go? Who were Orpah and Ruth? How long was Naomi in Moab? What change came to the family in Moab? Why did Naomi decide to return to Bethlehem? What choices did Orpah and Ruth make with regard to going with Naomi? What arguments did Naomi use to persuade her daughters-in-law to return to their mothers' houses? How did Ruth express her decision?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. Intervening history. (1) The work of Samson for Israel. (2) Micah and his priest. (3) The desolation of Benjamin. 2. The Book of Ruth. (1) Its character. (2) Its authorship and date are uncertain. 3. The great truths taught in this lesson.

II. Theme.—Devotion to God.

III. A sojourn in Moab.—1. The location and extent of the land of Moab. 2. The Moabites were descendants of Lot. 3. The family of Elimelech. 4. Reason for leaving Bethlehem and going to Moab. 5. Meaning of the names of Elimelech's family. 6. The experiences of this family in Moab. 7. The propriety of going among the heathen for profit. 8. The piety of this Israelitish family. 9. The question as to whether Mahlon and Chilion did right in marrying Moabitish women. 10. The length of Naomi's sojourn in Moab.

IV. Going with God's people.—1. The reason why Naomi decided to return to Canaan. (1) Attractions in Moab. (2) Attractions in Canaan. 2. Accompanied on the way by Orpah and Ruth. 3. The influence which Naomi had over her daughters-in-law. 4. The religion of the Moabites was idolatrous. 5. The disposition of Orpah and Ruth to go with Naomi. 6. Arguments used by Naomi to induce them to go back. 7. Orpah's decision. 8. Ruth's decision. (1) Positive. (2) Pious. (3) Permanent.

V. Rewards of right choices.—1. Peace of mind. 2. Fitness to help others. 3. Ruth placed herself of set purpose among God's people. 4. Had temporal advantages as shown by the results of her gleaning; she was helpful to Naomi. 5. She had social advantages in that she became the wife of Boaz. 6. She is forever honored as being one through whom our Lord came. 7. Results of right choices.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**True consecration.**

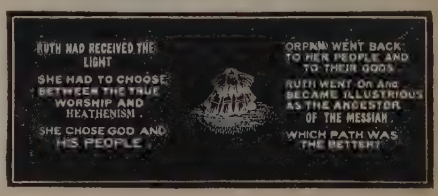
I. The standard of Naomi's life.
II. The embodiment of Ruth's choice.

I. The standard of Naomi's life. We are here given a glimpse into the domestic life of Israel. The customs of the time were primitive and the habits of the people simple. Naomi and her two daughters-in-law in their widowhood present a pathetic picture. A common sorrow had brought them very close to one another. Naomi was a strong character. She retained her allegiance to the living God in the midst of surrounding idolatry and in the midst of adversity. She proved herself a true Israelite indeed. God wonderfully supported her in all her afflictions. Her record is a pattern of patience and fidelity to all generations. An inevitable crisis came when Naomi resolved to return to Bethlehem. Her influence upon Ruth and Orpah was clearly manifest in their resolution to return with her. Naomi did not desire to prevent either of them from accompanying her to Canaan, but she did not wish them to do so simply for her sake. When she spoke of their kindness to her, she did not contemplate how much their conduct was the result of her own. Her character as a true mother was "the stem around which the tendrils of their young hearts might climb to their mother's God." The character of both young widows is beautiful, but the test of parting revealed the heroine. Orpah loved Naomi and wept bitterly at parting from her. Ruth was fixed in her desire and determination to cast in her lot with her desolate and destitute mother-in-law. Naomi was careful to put Ruth in an attitude of entire freedom. Orpah failed in courage though not in affection. Ruth's love led on to faith and a living heritage. All the elements of a true choice of God are here described in Naomi's dealings with her daughters-in-law. She stood firm in presenting the tests necessary for them to continue with her.

II. The embodiment of Ruth's choice. There is no utterance in the Old Testament more pathetic than Ruth's words of entreaty and resolve. Courage and sacrifice, love and devotion breathe all through them. The simple pathos and unstudied eloquence of her language is unsurpassed. Love and resolution were at their height. Lovely and gentle as she appeared, humbly and affectionately as she pleaded, there were amazing dignity and firmness in her resolve, the fervent outpouring of a true heart. Ruth does not appear to have bestowed a thought upon an accurate adjustment of duty and interest; nor to have considered whether her feelings were extravagant or reasonable; neither to have entertained any idea that she was making a sacrifice at all. The love of her yearning heart was her monitor and law. The marriage-bond had been to her a law of liberty because a law of love. At her marriage the current of her life had received its direction and in a nature like hers that direction was to be maintained forever. Her firmness was the result of the thoughtful decision of her enlightened mind and consecrated heart. That strong and brave decision revealed a character of no ordinary quality. Her outward life was but the spontaneous outflow of the fountain within. Her decision comprehended the sum of all her actions and reached the utmost limit of her existence. The religion which her mother-in-law brought with her to Moab became Ruth's hope. One Gentile proselyte was thereby to be brought to the worship of Israel's God. Little was Naomi aware of the treasure she was bringing to Israel, or of the honor which was in store for Ruth, or of the part she had in such soul-winning. Ruth's choice was prompt, humble, affectionate, determined and entire. She made the transfer of herself freely, completely and without reserve. Had her steadfastness depended upon her human relations alone and had her heart not rooted itself in the divine she would have followed Orpah. Her heart proved to be the true monitor and benefactor of her life. The crowning grace of her character was her piety. The utter unselfishness in her devotion is beautiful to contemplate. Human kindness, filial piety, affectionate constancy, uncomplaining toil, true chastity, sweet patience, strong faith and noble generosity are all found in this record of domestic life.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The Book of Ruth. Benjamin Franklin once attended a gathering of French writers and philosophers, all of whom were skeptics. Much sport was made of the Bible, especially of its lack of literary quality. At length Mr. Franklin asked permission to read from a book he had just purchased. They eagerly assented and listened with astonishment and frequent ejaculations of pleasure. When he concluded they were unanimous in demanding the title of the book or the name of the author. Mr. Franklin quietly answered, "Gentlemen, I have read you the Book of Ruth from the Bible." Voltaire said, "We know nothing in either Homer or Herodotus that goes to the heart like Ruth's answer to her mother" (vs. 16, 17).

Back to Moab. Moab with its idols, its child-sacrifices, its licentious rites of worship was more attractive to Orpah than the distant land of Judea with its long, dangerous, wearisome journey. Many times those who are almost persuaded to be Christians drift the farthest away. What a long, sad list we have of the travelers of the back track. Note Lot's wife, Orpah, Judas Iscariot, the nameless young man, Ananias, Demas. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). It is of supreme importance that those who are in the way to heaven continue therein, for the state of the backslider is deplorable from every point of view.

On to Canaan. It is easier to stay in Moab than to travel to Canaan. It is easier to drift with the world than to fight for a crown. But the forward path opens into the vistas of future glory. If we would escape death and obtain eternal life, like Ruth we must make the fivefold choice. 1. We must choose the Christian's God. The Baal-gods of this world can never give the bliss for which we sigh. But the Jehovah-God gives pardon and peace and reward. 2. We must choose the Christian's path. That Canaan path led across deserts. There were dangers from robbers and the cry of jackals was heard along the edge of the wilderness. So the Christian's path is not always smooth, but it is straight and leads directly to the land that is far off. 3. We must choose the Christian's habitation. The believers who have become the "habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:22) form the church. A day in her courts is better than a thousand in the houses of Moab. To be a doorkeeper in God's house is better than to dwell in the tents of wickedness, even though the latter are the dwelling-places of friends and relatives. 4. We must choose Christian associations. The world will love its own. The dance, the theater, the card party, the centers of earthly pleasure, do not form the association of those seeking a lot in the heavenly Canaan. Such seekers deliberately announce they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth. "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country" (Heb. 11:14). 5. We must choose the Christian's death and burial. Joseph Addison sent for the dissipated Lord Warwick and said, "I have sent for you that you might see how a Christian dies." Addison then closed his eyes in death. John Wesley said, "The best of all is, God is with us." General Fisk asked a dying soldier how he felt about dying. He replied, "I feel as though I was going to the front." For the Christian death has no terrors. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—Right choices bring rich blessings.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Ruth { Well taught / In earnest / Was blessed

CHOOSE GOD'S WAYS

Review. Question the class about Samson, spending a few minutes upon some of his exploits. Do not fail to notice the fact that he did not use strong drink. Note the connection between total abstinence and physical strength. Try to impress the class with the thought that it is foolish, as well as wicked, for people to drink that which intoxicates.

Ruth learned about God. In order to teach this lesson successfully, one must be very familiar with the entire history of Ruth. This beautiful story is strikingly interesting and impressive. Show the class the land of Moab on the map and the place where Naomi lived at first. Describe the scarcity of food in Bethlehem and the abundance in Moab. Describe the removal of the family from Canaan to Moab. Ruth became the wife of one of the sons of Elimelech and Naomi. She learned about the true God. Her own people were idolaters. True Christians have an influence upon those with whom they live.

Ruth was in earnest. In some way word came to Naomi that there was plenty of food in Bethlehem where she formerly lived, and she decided to go back. Draw a word picture of Naomi, Orpah and Ruth, whose husbands were dead, starting out together toward Canaan. Naomi was going, but she supposed her daughters-in-law were going just a short distance with her to keep her company. Naomi loved them and she thought it would be better for them to stay in Moab, so she tried to persuade them not to go further with her. At last Orpah yielded and kissed Naomi good-by and returned, but Ruth was in earnest to go on. She declared that she would go with Naomi, and would live and die with her people. She would serve Naomi's God. She was in real earnest, while Orpah was not. She reached the land of Israel, but Orpah stayed in Moab and we do not hear of her again.

Ruth was blessed. Tell the story of Ruth's arrival at Bethlehem and of her going to work to gather grain in the fields of Boaz as a gleaner. She had good success. She helped Naomi, her mother-in-law. She later became the wife of Boaz and had a son named Obed, who was the grandfather of King David. Christ was one of her descendants. Show that Ruth was thus blessed and honored because she was determined to be with God's people and serve the God of Israel.

Choose God's ways. Every one has the power to choose between the good and the bad. It is always best to choose what we know is good. Here is an opportunity to impress the lesson of choosing good associates. Ruth fell in with God's people and clung to them, therefore she was blessed and honored. Let the class tell all the advantages they can that come from making right choices.

LESSON VII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Feb. 8.—Samuel called to be a prophet.—1 Sam. 3:1-13, 19, 20. Tu.—A devout mother.—1 Sam. 1:21-28. Wed.—Song of thanksgiving.—1 Sam. 2:1-10. Th.—Jeremiah called.—Jer. 1:4-12. Fr.—Ezekiel called.—Ezek. 2; 1-10. Sat.—Prophetic responsibility.—Ezek. 33:1-9. Su.—A universal call.—Eph. 4:1-16.

Samuel Called to Be a Prophet.—1 Sam. 1:24-28; 3:1-21. Print 3:1-13, 19, 20.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 8, 9)

SUPT.—1 And the child Sam'u-el ministered unto the Lord before E'li. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

School.—2 And it came to pass at that time, when E'li was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see;

3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Sam'u-el was laid down to sleep;

4 That the Lord called Sam'u-el: and he answered, Here am I.

5 And he ran unto E'li, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 And the Lord called yet again, Sam'u-el. And Sam'u-el arose and went to E'li, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7 Now Sam'u-el did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.

8 And the Lord called Sam'u-el again the third time. And he arose and went to E'li, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And E'li perceived that the Lord had called the child.

9 Therefore E'li said unto Sam'u-el, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Sam'u-el went and lay down in his place.

10 And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Sam'u-el, Sam'u-el. Then Sam'u-el answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

11 And the Lord said to Sam'u-el, Behold, I will do a thing in Is'ra-el, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12 In that day I will perform against E'li all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

19 And Sam'u-el grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Is'ra-el from Dan even to Beer-she'ba knew that Sam'u-el was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 And the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, so that he could not see), 3 and the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down to sleep, in the temple of Jehovah, where the ark of God was; 4 that Jehovah called Samuel: and he said, Here am I. 5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. 6 And Jehovah called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. 7 Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither was the word of Jehovah yet revealed unto him. 8 And Jehovah called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that Jehovah had called the child. 9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak; for thy servant heareth. 11 And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the end. 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not.

19 And Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. 1 Sam. 3:9.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord calls us all into his service.**

TOPIC.—**Preparation for success.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Samuel presented to the Lord. II. The Lord calling Samuel. III. The message to Eli. IV. Samuel a prophet.**

TIME.—**B. C. 1134.**

PLACE.—**Shiloh, five miles north of Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—Formerly the two books of Samuel were one. It was divided by the Septuagint translators. The name given to the book does not necessarily indicate that Samuel was the author, but that he is the most prominent character in it. The authorship is unknown. A Jewish tradition ascribes it to Samuel himself; but he could have written only the first twenty-four chapters of 1 Samuel, for the following chapter gives an account of his death. It seems probable that the author lived much later than Samuel. "The Book of Judges closes with the significant remark, 'In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes' (Judges 21:25). The Book of Samuel opens with the birth of the prophet who was raised up by the providence of God to usher in a new regime, which should reduce this chaos to order. Eli appears on the scene only so far as he is connected with the early life of Samuel."—Cam. Bib. Samuel was the divinely appointed agent to cooperate with God in making the change in the government of Israel from a theocracy to a kingdom. He saw the Israelites in their unorganized condition and he saw them as a nation with a recognized head. The nation showed that they were not fitted for self-government and that they were not closely enough in touch with God to admit of the theocracy's being a success. In the present lesson we have introduced to us a man who was one of Israel's greatest prophets. Samuel was a child of promise. Hannah earnestly besought the Lord for a son and told him that, if he would hear and answer her prayer, she would give that child to him to be his all the days of his life. Her prayer was heard,

and the Lord gave her besides, three sons and two daughters.

COMMENTARY.—I. SAMUEL PRESENTED TO THE LORD (1:24-28). According to the pledge which Hannah made to the Lord, if he would give her a son, she took him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh, and there gave him over into the hands of Eli, the priest. Samuel was just weaned and could not have been more than two or three years old, even taking into consideration Oriental customs. "The objection has been made that so young a child would have been troublesome to Eli, but there were women engaged in the tabernacle service, to whose care he might have been committed. It was important that he should be dedicated as soon as possible. The house of God was to be the only home he knew: the earliest impressions of his boyhood were to be those of the sanctuary."—*Kirkpatrick.* Hannah took as an offering to the Lord three bullocks, a half bushel or more of flour and a skin-bottle of wine. It has been suggested that one bullock was for a burnt-offering, one for the "sacrifice in performing a vow," and one for a peace offering (Num. 15:9).

II. THE LORD CALLING SAMUEL (vs. 1-10). **1. Samuel**—The name means, "Asked of God." **ministered unto the Lord before Eli**—A minister is a servant. Samuel was, according to the opinion of Josephus, twelve years old at this time. He had duties to perform about the tabernacle, pertaining to the light (v. 3) and the doors (v. 15). He was also the personal attendant of Eli, who was aged and partially blind. **word of the Lord was precious**—The word was rare, as the moral and spiritual condition of Israel was not favorable to frequent messages from God to the people. Priests and people had departed from the Lord. **no open vision**—"No frequent vision."—*R. V.* **2. at that time**—It was during the period of the scarcity of revelation. It was a memorable time in the lives of Eli and Samuel. **Eli was laid down in his place**—He probably slept in one of the buildings surrounding the tabernacle erected for the accommodation of the priests and other attendants. Samuel slept near by. **3. ere the lamp of God went out**—This was the golden lamp which stood before the most holy place. It was lighted at sunset and burned until morning. **where the ark of God was**—This was the most holy place. The ark was the symbol of God's presence. It was a chest that had been made according to directions given to Moses by the Lord in Mount Sinai.

4. the Lord called Samuel—The boy was awakened by the call, "and he answered, Here am I." Samuel was attentive to his duties. The voice must have sounded to him like that of Eli, but being awakened from sleep by the call, he would not be likely to judge clearly whence it came. **5. he ran unto Eli**—Inasmuch as he was accustomed to wait upon Eli, it was entirely natural that he should suppose that Eli had called him, thinking he needed some attention. **I called not**—Samuel must have been surprised at Eli's answer, but he took it that he himself might have been mistaken. At Eli's direction he obediently lay down again. **6. thou didst call me**—Samuel's readiness and attention afford an excellent example of the virtue of obedience. **7. Samuel did not yet know the Lord**—Samuel knew not the Lord in the way of receiving divine communications from him, for, as already stated, such communications were at that time rare.—*Whedon.* The second part of the verse explains the first.

8. Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child—If Samuel had come to him but once or even twice, thinking that he had called him, he would probably have thought the boy was dreaming; but when he came the third time, positive that Eli had called him, the priest was convinced that the Lord was speaking to him. **9. speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth**—No wiser advice could have been given than this. When God calls, and he calls all, this is a most fitting response to make. **10. the Lord came, and stood, and called**—God not only spoke to Samuel, but he also appeared to him in some visible form. He calls all children by his Spirit. He speaks to them while their hearts are tender.

III. THE MESSAGE TO ELI (vs. 11-18). **11. the Lord said to Samuel**—God did not at this time speak directly to Eli. He had previously sent a prophet to him, as recorded in the preceding chapter. He speaks to Samuel now, in calling him to the prophetic office, and for the purpose of preparing him for receiving and delivering other messages from himself. **ears....shall tingle**—As a loud, sharp, discordant note thrills one's ears with pain, so the bitter tidings of Israel's woe in the judgment about to fall on Eli's house would shock all Israel.—*Terry.* Reference is made to the coming defeat of Israel by the Philistines, in which the ark of the covenant would be captured, Eli's sons would lose their lives and Eli himself would die as a consequence of the defeat. **12. which I have spoken**—By the prophet, as recorded in I Sam. 2:27-36. **make an end**—The Lord would complete the work which he had threatened by his prophet. **13. his sons made themselves vile**—They were greedy and licentious. **restrained them not**—Eli "contented himself with gentle expostulation (1 Sam. 2:23), instead of thrusting them out of the sacred office they had so grossly abused. By this weak indulgence he became partaker of their sins." **14-18.** Samuel lay until morning, then opened the doors of the house of the Lord as usual. Eli had to press the boy strongly for a report of what God had said to him. When he heard the message, he quietly acknowledged the justice of it all.

IV. SAMUEL A PROPHET (vs. 19-21). **19. the Lord was with him**—God's presence affords comfort, strength and guidance. God was with Abraham (Gen. 21:22), Jacob (Gen. 28:15), Joseph (Gen. 39:2), Moses (Exod. 3:12), Joshua (Josh. 1:5), Gideon (Judges 6:16), David (1 Sam. 16:18), and others. **let none of his words fall to the ground**—What Samuel said under divine inspiration came to pass. He was a true prophet. **20. from Dan even to Beer-sheba**—This phrase denotes the total extent of Israel. Dan was at the extreme north and Beer-sheba at the extreme south. **was established to be a prophet of the Lord**—All the people of Israel were convinced that Samuel was a prophet from the fact that all his prophetic utterances proved true. **21.** The visible abode of Jehovah was in Shiloh and there he revealed himself to his prophet.

QUESTIONS.—Who were Elkanah and Hannah? What was the burden of Hannah's prayer at the house of the Lord? To whom did Hannah "lend" Samuel and for how long? Where did Samuel live? What were some of the boy Samuel's duties? What did he hear one night? How many times was he called? What message did the Lord give Samuel for Eli? How did Eli receive the message? Tell how Samuel became established as a prophet in Israel.

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. Lessons from the story of Ruth. 2. The condition of the nation of Israel under the later judges. 3. God's plan for the government of Israel. 4. The reasons why the theocracy was not fully successful. 5. The change from the administration by judges to a kingdom. 6. In this period a great leader was necessary. 7. There were godly persons living in Israel.

II. Theme.—Called to service.

III. The parentage of Samuel.—1. The ancestry of Elkanah and Hannah is obscure. 2. They were devoted to God. 3. Hannah's prayer to God as a childless wife for a son. 4. Her vow. (1) Her son should be a Nazarite (Num. 6:1-21). (2) He should be devoted to God's special service. 5. The answer to her prayer. 6. The influence of heredity. 7. Hannah's other children.

IV. A boy presented to the Lord.—1. The age at which Samuel was taken to the house of the Lord to remain. 2. The offering which Elkanah and Hannah took with Samuel. 3. Samuel was lent to the Lord. 4. His earliest recollections would be of the house of the Lord. 5. The continued care of Hannah for Samuel.

V. Samuel's call.—1. Samuel's duties at the tabernacle. 2. The age at which his call came. 3. The circumstances of the call. (1) At night. (2) By a voice. (3) The boy's attention and promptness. (4) The voice repeated. (5) Eli's directions to Samuel. 4. The message to Eli. (1) Eli's fault. (2) The blow which was to fall upon Eli. (3) Eli's reception of the message. 5. Duty of parents toward their children. 6. God's favor was upon Samuel. 7. Proofs that he was a prophet. 8. The call that comes to all.

Practical Survey

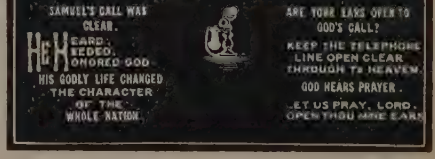
Topic.—**Preparation for service.**

I. Parental consecration.
II. Individual consecration.

I. Parental consecration. Much of scripture biography begins with a statement regarding the parentage of the subject. We learn of Samuel by first learning of his mother. She had asked God for a son. She had emptied her heart of its sorrow and had it filled with joy. As she came to Shiloh her soul was deeply moved upon the recollection of the time when she had prayed in that place for a child, and further in contemplation of the precious gift received, and even more by her present purpose to consecrate him to the service of the Lord for life. Hannah did not know what honor God would put upon her sacrifice nor what honor would come to her through her son. The coming of Samuel was the beginning of a new era, the time of a great crisis in Jewish history. His life began in a dark and stormy period amid a demoralized priesthood, among a people alienated from God, in a time of great moral and spiritual darkness. Among the heroes of God's kingdom who have been brought to the Lord by the prayers of their mothers and consecrated as his instruments for service, Samuel is a shining example. The child, devoutly consecrated by his mother, became great as a prophet, the one chosen of God to close the order of judges and to inaugurate the government of kings. By a striking concurrence we have two domestic histories unfolded side by side, the wise parental training of Elkanah and Hannah and the tragic story of Eli and his sons. Hannah stands as a model for mothers. Eli stands a warning to fathers. The lesson is plain that a parent is a ruler by appointment of God, held at God's bar accountable for the office and work of a ruler. Child life is of untold value in the sight of God.

II. Individual consecration. Out of Hannah's sorrow and her concentrated, continued, importunate prayer came a nation's reformation and salvation. The early occupation of Samuel, in the temple, was the initiatory stage of his life-work. He was destined to maintain the law and authority of God, to rebuke iniquity, to check degeneracy and to insist upon the separation of Israel from heathen nations and their customs. He was to retrieve losses, assuage excitements, reestablish justice, reprove, rebuke and exhort the people. His business was to keep all Israel true to the divine purpose for which they had been made a nation. In the morning of the day and in the morning of his life the Lord called Samuel and gave him great spiritual light. His call was the first step toward superseding Eli. It was necessary that Eli should be assured that Samuel's call was from the Lord, and that it was the beginning of the fulfilment of God's threatenings against himself, and that the religious supremacy of the priest was to be superseded by that of the prophet. Samuel was thus a witness to God's demand for a spiritual religion in contrast to mere form. The three calls convinced Eli and prepared Samuel. There is something very pathetic and beautiful in Eli's prompt and ungrudging recognition of God's call to his young attendant. He exhibited no personal or official jealousy, but kindly directed Samuel how to receive God's message. He was unswervingly just. He must have foreboded some message of reproof and judgment when the call came not to himself. Simplicity, uprightness and obedience were expressed in Samuel's repeated appearance before Eli. The young child offered himself most unconsciously to a duty, immediate and pressing, which put his character to a test by leaving to his judgment the use which he should make of so terrible a communication. Samuel exhibited great self-control, discretion and considerate reserve. While he was faithful to God he was respectful to Eli. The verdict against Eli was that he did nothing effectual in the way of preventing his sons in their iniquities, which his duty as high priest should have led him to do. He who had judged Israel for nearly forty years was now condemned at the bar of his own conscience. In sharp contrast to the exaltation of Samuel to his prophetic life is the picture of Eli's house. T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Samuel was called when a child (v. 1). The Bible places special emphasis on the fact that the young are to respond to God's call. "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me" (Prov. 8:17). "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Eccl. 12:1). Josiah was only eight years old when he became king of Judah, yet he "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left" (2 Chron. 34:2). Timothy knew the holy scriptures from a child (2 Tim. 3:15). "Reason would teach us, if revelation did not, that childhood is the most propitious period of life to instil those precepts, ingraft those truths and form those habits which become the people of God, who are emphatically styled a holy and peculiar people. It is common sense to put the seal to the wax while it is soft; to bud the tender twig with the fruit it should bear; to go to the fountain-head, and guide the current of the stream; to lay hold upon the young tendrils of the shooting vine, and to train them as we would have them to go."

Samuel was called personally (v. 4). God's calls are definite. Instances: Adam (Gen. 3:9), Abraham (Gen. 22:11), Moses (Exod. 3:4), Elijah (1 Kings 19:13), Paul (Acts 9:4). The writer was holding meetings in a town in Nebraska some years ago. The work was going on in power. A man came into the meeting one night to see what was being done. In the opening prayer a brother prayed that some arrow of truth might be sent home to some soul that night. The sentence was carried to this stranger's heart like a shot from a gun. He partially rose from his seat and thought of going home, but remained to the close of the service. That sentence rankled in his breast and was a goad to his spirit for days until he yielded to God and was gloriously converted. "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Heb. 4:7). None can be too thankful to God for pressing home his claims upon them.

Samuel called to be a prophet (v. 11). "In the days when the high priest Eli was judge of Israel, there appeared in the sanctuary of Shiloh a wonderful child; his name was Samuel. It was a dark and stormy time; there were fears within and fightings without. Israel was climbing a steep hill, arduously and painfully. Her progress was slow; she was alternately worsted and victorious. And the struggle was more arduous from the fact that there was no prophecy. It was an age of materialism. The hands of Moses were no longer uplifted on the mountain; the eyes of Moses no longer gazed on a promised glory. Religion had become a form; its spirit had fled. There were few indications of that heroic time when Joshua had fought for God, and Deborah had sung for God. The nation had lost its poetry, and had lost its faith; these had to be kindled anew at the lamp of heaven. Where was the new kindling to begin? In the heart of a sage? No. In the breast of an old man? No. In the leaders of the Jewish armies? No. It was to begin in the soul of a little child. Out of the mouth of a babe in knowledge, God was to ordain strength."

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The Lord calls children, as well as older persons, into his service.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

A CHILD
- GIVEN TO HANNAH
- LENT TO THE LORD
- CALLED TO BE A PROPHET
- A BLESSING TO ISRAEL

A look backward. It will be well to linger a few minutes to take another glance at Ruth. Ask each child in the class to tell something about her. Write her name in large letters on the blackboard, and then write words around it standing for the answers given. When all have answered, see how complete a history you have drawn from the class. Teach the truth with emphasis that Ruth was fully determined to be with God's people and serve the Lord, and she was richly blessed.

A mother's joy. Elkanah was Hannah's husband. They were godly people, but Hannah had no child. Tell about Hannah's going to the house of the Lord and praying that the Lord would give her a son. Tell what she was determined to do with a son if she should receive the answer to her prayer. Ask the class to tell the name of Hannah's baby boy. She was glad that God heard and answered her prayer.

A little boy lent to the Lord. Tell the story of the journey of Elkanah and Hannah with Samuel to Shiloh to the house of the Lord. Hannah loved her boy, but she loved God more, and she wanted her little son to be the Lord's servant all his life. Mothers do not like to have their children away from them. Hannah was willing to have Samuel go to the house of the Lord and remain there and serve the Lord. She made a coat each year and took it to him at the time of the yearly sacrifice. Ask the children their ages. You will have no scholars in the class as young as Samuel was when he went to live in the Lord's house. Show how good it is for children to serve the Lord. They can give themselves to him and be converted, thus they can be happy themselves and can be a blessing to others as Samuel was.

God called Samuel. Tell how useful Samuel was to Eli about the house of the Lord. There were many things he could do for the Lord by waiting on Eli, the aged priest. Tell the story of the night when the voice came to him four times. What do the children do when they hear some one calling them? Can they tell what Samuel did when he heard his name called? As Eli was old and could not see well, Samuel thought he wanted him to do something for him. God was speaking to this boy twelve years old. Tell the story of Eli and his boys. The sons were wicked and their father did not control them. A man said he had his children thank him for every punishment he gave them. They might not think it good then, but they would be thankful in after years.

Samuel a prophet. This boy grew up to be a good and useful man. The Lord was with him and gave him messages for the people. From Dan to Beer-sheba, all through the land of Israel, it was known that Samuel was God's prophet. He loved God and his people and served them faithfully.

LESSON VIII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Feb. 15.—The death of Eli and his sons.—1 Sam. 4:1-18. Tu.—The bad sons of Eli.—1 Sam. 2:12-17, 22-26. Wed.—Prophecy against Eli's house.—1 Sam. 2:27-36. Th.—Reward of the righteous.—Ezek. 18:1-9. Fr.—Personal responsibility.—Ezek. 18:10-20. Sat.—Penitence and life.—Ezek. 18:21-32. Su.—Triumph in death.—Psa. 16:1-11.

The Death of Eli and His Sons.—1 Samuel 4: 1-18. Print 4: 1-13, 18.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 10, 11)

SUPT.—1 And the word of Sam'u-el came to all Is'ra-el. Now Is'ra-el went out against the Phil'is-tines to battle, and pitched beside Eb-en-e'zer: and the Phil'is-tines pitched in A'phek.

School.—2 And the Phil'is-tines put themselves in array against Is'ra-el: and when they joined battle, Is'ra-el was smitten before the Phil'is-tines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Is'ra-el said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to day before the Phil'is-tines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shi'loh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

4 So the people sent to Shi'loh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cher'u-bims: and the two sons of E'li, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Is'ra-el shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

6 And when the Phil'is-tines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the He'brews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp.

7 And the Phil'is-tines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the E-gyp'-tians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

9 Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Phil'-is-tines, that ye be not servants unto the He'brews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

10 And the Phil'is-tines fought, and Is'ra-el was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Is'ra-el thirty thousand foot-men.

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of E'li, Hoph'ni and Phin'e-has, were slain.

12 And there ran a man of Ben'ja-min out of the army, and came to Shi'loh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, E'li sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Is'ra-el forty years.

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1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and encamped beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines encamped in Aphek. 2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines; and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men. 3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath Jehovah smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of Shiloh unto us, that it may come among us, and save us out of the hand of our enemies. 4 So the people sent to Shiloh; and they brought from thence the ark of the covenant of Jehovah of hosts, who sitteth above the cherubim: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of Jehovah came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. 6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of Jehovah was come into the camp. 7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. 8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods? these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all manner of plagues in the wilderness. 9 Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight. 10 And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man to his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. 11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day, with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head. 13 And when he came, lo, Eli was sitting upon his seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. James 1:22.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**Sin brings disaster.**

TOPIC.—**Disaster in Israel.**

OUTLINE.—**I. The ark carried into battle. II. The Philistines terrified. III. Israel defeated. IV. The death of Eli.**

TIME.—**B. C. 1114.**

PLACES.—**Ebenezer; Aphek; Shiloh.**

INTRODUCTION.—The scripture portion we study to-day presents to us the picture of Israel in a distressed condition. The nation was under the power of the Philistines, and had been for twenty years. Eli,

the judge of Israel, while he was, generally speaking, a good man and intended to do right, had failed in his attitude toward his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, whom he had retained in the priesthood when they were wicked and were bringing a reproach upon the religion of the nation. The penalty that had been decreed by the Lord and made known to Eli by the boy Samuel, was about to be inflicted.

COMMENTARY.—I. THE ARK CARRIED INTO BATTLE (vs. 1-5). **1. the word of Samuel**—Samuel had become recognized throughout Israel as a prophet of the Lord. The first sentence of this chapter apparently belongs to the preceding one. **against the Philistines**—The Philistines occupied the plains along the Mediterranean Sea in the southwestern part of Canaan and further south toward Egypt. Their name means immigrants, and they may have come from Egypt. From their name is derived the word Palestine. They were a thrifty agricultural and commercial people, and were warlike. During the twenty years in which they were oppressing Israel, Samson had been active, carrying on a campaign, single-handed, against them and making them much trouble. Israel had become aroused against them and decided to engage in war in an effort to throw off their yoke. **Eben-ezer**—By anticipation the place was called so, but the name was not given to it until twenty years later. It was situated a few miles from Jerusalem, probably northwest of it. The location is not now known. **Aphek**—A fortified place. There were many places in Canaan called by that name. It must have been near Ebenezer. **2. Israel was smitten**—The Philistines had the advantage in the first conflict. Israel's loss was heavy, being four thousand men.

3. wherefore hath the Lord smitten us—The elders of Israel acknowledged that the Lord had not been fighting for them. They wondered why, and yet they should have known that it was because they had forsaken the true God. **let us fetch the ark of the covenant**—The ark represented the divine presence. The men of Israel supposed that God would not permit it to be taken from them, hence they believed that, with it in the army, the Philistines might not be allowed to triumph over them. In the battle just fought, the superiority of the Philistine army over that of Israel was clearly shown. **4. sent to Shiloh**—The location of Shiloh is placed seventeen miles north of Jerusalem near the road between that city and Shechem. The tabernacle was there, and it was for many years the religious center of the nation. **cherubims**—"Cherubim."—*R. V.* The cherubim were winged figures facing each other and standing over the ark of the covenant, probably "as guardians of the covenant." **Hophni and Phinehas**—Eli was ninety-eight years old, and being aged, his sons, though wicked, were serving as priests in his stead. They had charge of the ark. **5. shouted with a great shout**—The exultation was not because of the reverence the people of Israel had for God and his laws and ordinances, but because they had strong expectations that they would now be victorious over their enemies. It was to them the same as if their army had been increased by a large number of fighting men. "Had they humbled themselves and prayed devoutly and fervently for success, they would have been heard and saved. Their shouting proved both their vanity and irreligion."—*Clarke.*

II. THE PHILISTINES TERRIFIED (vs. 6-9). **6. what meaneth the noise**—The Israelites had just been greatly humiliated by their defeat and loss by the Philistines, and they might well wonder why the people of Israel were thus exultant. **Hebrews**—The name by which the descendants of Jacob, or Israel, were called. The word means "beyond," and was first applied to Abraham because he came from beyond the Euphrates. **7. the Philistines were afraid**—When they learned that the most sacred object in connection with the worship of the Israelites, even the symbol of the divine presence, was in their camp, they were far less confident in their strength than they were before. **woe unto us**—The Philistines were troubled because they thought that Jehovah had come into Israel's camp, and they did not know that he had really departed from them. **8. these mighty Gods**—The Philistines were polytheists and supposed that the Israelites, also, served many gods. They knew what had been done for Israel three or four hundred years before this, when they were delivered from Egyptian bondage. It is likely that they had heard how God opened the Jordan for the passage of Israel into Canaan and had given them the city of Jericho in a marvelous manner. **9. quit yourselves like men**—Observe how vividly the successive emotions of the Philistines are painted: astonishment, when they heard the triumphant shout of the vanquished army; dismay, when they learned its cause; manly resolution, when they had recovered from the first panic.—*Cam. Bib.*

III. ISRAEL DEFEATED (vs. 10, 11). **10. Israel was smitten**—Instead of humbling themselves and crying to God for help, the Israelites trusted in the presence of the sacred ark to save them. Their trust was in vain. The courage of the Philistines was that of desperation. Their lives and liberty were in danger. Their enemy was weak with over-confidence. The Philistines were easily victorious. **fled every man into his tent**—The thought is that every one who could, fled for safety to his own home. The army had been utterly routed. A large proportion of the people of Israel lived in tents. The men of the army made no effort to reunite to oppose the Philistines. **11. the ark of God was taken**—So far from the ark's saving Israel, it was itself captured by the Philistines, and thus the Israelitish nation and its religion became despised.

IV. THE DEATH OF ELI (vs. 12-18). **12. came to Shiloh**—The distance may have been twenty miles. A practised runner could cover the distance in three or four hours. **clothes rent**—To tear one's clothing was a sign of grief. **with earth upon his head**—This also was a token of grief. **13. Eli....watching**—He was occupying his official seat, which was by the gate of the tabernacle enclosure or by the gate of the city. He was anxious for the ark of the covenant. **14-17.** At Eli's request the messenger told him of the terrible defeat of Israel, of the death of Hophni and Phinehas and of the loss of the ark of God. **18. made mention of the ark of God**—Eli had borne the news of Israel's defeat and of the death of his sons, but when he heard that the ark was taken he could not bear it and he died. His heart was set upon the service and honor of Jehovah.

QUESTIONS.—Who was Samuel? Where did the Philistines live? What were the relations between the Philistines and the Israelites? Where did the Israelites and the Philistines meet in battle? What was the result of the first engagement? What course did Israel take with the hope of being victorious in the next engagement? What prediction was fulfilled with respect to Eli and his sons?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The connection between the preceding lesson and this. (1) Samuel had become a man of thirty-two years and was influential. (2) The doom, pronounced upon Eli and his family, was fulfilled. 2. The character of Eli. 3. The work that Samson had been doing. 4. The price of prosperity for Israel. 5. The cause of Israel's adversity. 6. The basis of spiritual prosperity.

II. Theme.—Results of unfaithfulness.

III. Israel's desperate act.—1. The Philistines. (1) Their name. (2) Their origin. (3) Their character. (4) Their attitude toward Israel. (5) God permitted them to subjugate Israel for forty years in all. 2. Israel's effort to throw off the yoke. 3. The result of the first engagement at Ebenezer. 4. The resolution to bring the ark of the covenant into the camp of Israel. 5. The effect of its arrival. (1) Upon the Israelites. (2) Upon the Philistines. 6. Israel's great error.

IV. The Philistines' courage.—1. They did not understand the God of Israel. 2. They were determined not to become subject to the Israelites. 3. They believed they had a great task to perform. 4. The exhortation, "Quit yourselves like men." (1) An appeal to manhood. (2) A motto suitable for the Christian. 5. An example of courage in a bad cause.

V. Defeat and humiliation.—1. Israel's misplaced confidence. (1) Trusting in the ark of the covenant. (2) They should have humbled themselves and prayed to God. 2. An easy victory for the Philistines. 3. The loss of Israel's soldiers. 4. The ark taken by the Philistines. 5. Israel's religion brought under contempt. 6. A severe lesson to Israel. 7. Eli's doom involved in this defeat. 8. The effect of the news upon Eli. 9. An unfaithful leader and an unfaithful people.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Disaster in Israel.**

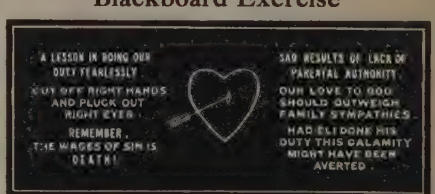
I. Resulted from moral apostasy.
II. Gave evidence of the veracity of God.

I. Resulted from moral apostasy. The lesson sets us in the midst of Israel's conflict with the Philistines. Had Israel been faithful to God since the conquest of Canaan, they would not at this time have been vexed and humiliated by the Philistines. Their cry of amazement (v. 3) stands between two defeats. In no way did they admit that the cause of their defeat was their own moral and religious apostasy. The spiritual condition of the people had never sunk lower than at this time. The peril of Israel lay as much in the unworthiness of their leaders as in the vices of the people. The character of the priesthood had become thoroughly corrupt. The people had changed their religion into a formal superstition. The neglect of family discipline, the daring disobedience of children in the priestly family and the disregard of the commandments of God among the people brought the nation to its day of judgment. Heedless of repentance and reformation, Israel sought freedom and prosperity by the exertion of their own physical powers. Conformity to the will of God was despised. Israel sought the ark of the Lord and trusted in it with superstitious veneration. It was a superstitious and irreverent use of the symbol of God's presence. This revealed the heathenish feature in the religious life of Israel and showed that their faith was obscured by superstition. Eli was the theocratic judge of the Hebrew commonwealth. Its administration centered around Shiloh where Eli dwelt and where the ark was kept and its statutes observed. But Israel called for Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli. These men who were rapacious, licentious and blasphemous, in common with Israel, did not reflect that the ark dissociated from the living God became a desecrated thing and that, if they so acted as to forfeit the real presence of God, the ark was powerless to lead them to victory. They were destined to learn the peril of irreverence, superstition and vain confidence.

II. Gave evidence of the veracity of God. Defeat came to Israel despite the presence of priests and boastful parade. There was a shout in the camp of Israel at the arrival of the ark. The sight of the sacred symbol made them boastful and confident. The Philistines fell into an error of a different kind, for they were frightened without any real cause. They mistook the visible for the invisible. The acquaintance of the heathen nations with the wonderful demonstrations of the power of the God of Israel in the many deliverances which he had wrought in their behalf was wide-spread. When Israel again faced the Philistines they mistook enthusiasm for faith. They valued novelty above the divine order. Israel met defeat because of years of disobedience, and were bereft of the divine presence and help. The whole nation, which had forsaken their God, was deprived of the sign of his presence. It was a most crushing catastrophe when the ark was taken and set up before the heathen god Dagon. Israel's exaltation was therefore speedily turned into humiliation and the fear of their enemies into triumph, though that event was not an assurance to the Philistines that God was not able to maintain the dignity of his own ark, for without any army he forced them to send it back to Israel. It was an evil day for Hophni and Phinehas when they took the ark of the covenant from Shiloh and sought to work on the fanaticism of the people. They provoked the judgment which shed their blood. It was no accident which sent them together to their death. It was a proof of the faithfulness of God to his word. It was a warning to transgressing Israel. They were made conscious of his power though the symbol of his presence was carried away by the hand of his enemies. Greater than the ark of the Lord was the Lord of the ark. Eli saw the affairs of the Jewish commonwealth brought to their lowest ebb. It was as a parent chiefly that he revealed his weakness, and in that character he was especially judged. The omission of parental restraint was ruinous to parent, children and the nation.

T. B. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The empty ark (v. 3). What was the ark? It was a chest made of wood. It was overlaid with pure gold, within and without, and crowned with a mercy-seat of pure gold. Over this mercy-seat and underneath the protecting wings of the two cherubim, the Shekinah had hovered. It symbolized the meeting place of God and man. It was the visible sign of God's presence. But the ark was an empty form. The Shekinah was gone. The law was there, the mercy-seat was there, the two cherubim were there, but there was no glory there. The form is useless without the Spirit. This is a day of bringing in of arks. Societies, institutional work, social service, whatever their value of themselves, will spell defeat if they are to take the place of the Spirit. Far too many, having lost purity of character, think the empty symbol will do the work of a living devotion. A certain writer says, "Once I recollect I was taken up with nine other boys at school to be punished, and I prayed to escape the shame. The master, previous to flogging all the others, said to me, to the great bewilderment of the whole school, 'Little boy, I excuse you. I have particular reasons for it.' That incident settled my mind for a long time; only I doubt whether it did me any good, for prayer became a charm. I knew I carried about a talisman, which would save me from all harm. It did not make me better, it simply gave me security." This is the error of thousands to-day who substitute a false security, based upon a superstitious reverence for a dead form, for a vital, character-producing grace.

Enthusiasm is not faith. "And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again" (v. 5). But all this shouting did not bring victory. They made the ground ring with their shouting but did not put away sin. The shouting multitude that accompanied the triumphal entry, within a few days were crying, "Crucify him." No amount of religious enthusiasm can take the place of faith and devotion to truth. There must be earnestness and healthful enthusiasm in order that God's work may be carried forward successfully, but there must also be true devotion to God and strict obedience to him. In fact, true religious zeal can not exist apart from piety and faith.

The harvest of sin (vs. 11, 18). Israel reaped it. In the sting of defeat at the hand of their enemies and the loss of the ark was the reaping of the whirlwind which was due them on account of their sins. The sons of Eli reaped it. Their profanation of holy things, their licentious lives and their mock devotion culminate in shame and death. Their untimely end is a striking illustration of the scripture, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Eccl. 8:11). Eli reaped it. Weak in government, lenient with his sons, permitting them to be guilty of the most scandalous sins, he sees the priesthood pass from his family, the government resting on other shoulders and his seed a beggared race. It is a terrible lesson. And then comes the messenger with the news of the loss of the ark and he falls to his death. Death and hell reaped a great harvest that day. "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Pet. 4:18). G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—They who neglect duty suffer punishment.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Unfaithful	Israel Eli Hophni Phinehas	Suffer punishment

Samuel, the Lord's child. The children are interested in recalling the lesson of last week, for they love to hear the story of Samuel. Let them tell about his being taken to the house of the Lord when he was a little boy, to stay there and serve God and the priest. Draw out from them the account given of his call, in which the Lord spoke to him four times. Recall the message that God gave to him for Eli. Refer to the child Moses, the boy Samson, the boy Jesus and the regard Jesus had for children. Call attention to what the Bible says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," and encourage the children to seek the Lord.

An unfaithful people. Recall some of the dealings of God with Israel. He saved the family of Jacob from famine by bringing them to Joseph in Egypt. He brought them out of Egypt by the hand of Moses. He led them for many years, protecting them from their enemies and supplying them with food and water. Recall the stay of Israel at Sinai, reviewing some of the Ten Commandments there given. Recall the miracles of the crossing of the Jordan and the fall of Jericho. Review briefly the great victory the Lord gave Gideon and his three hundred over the Midianites. After all that the Lord had done for the Israelites, they did not obey and worship him. They broke the commandments God had given them. They went to worshiping the gods of the heathen nations around them. For this reason the Lord allowed the Philistines to overcome them and take away their goods. Tell the story of the taking of the ark of the covenant into the battle and of its loss. The people were not true to God, and he would not fight for them. Do the children love God and do everything they know he would have them do? The Israelites suffered a great defeat because they were unfaithful.

Eli was not fully faithful. The story of Eli's unfaithfulness will be of profit to the children, for it brings out the idea that it is better for children to be corrected and grow up obedient to their parents than for them to have their own way and be wicked. Eli was a good man in most respects. He loved his nation. He was greatly interested in the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant. His one failure was in not correcting his sons. He allowed them to remain in the priest's office when they were wicked. The time came twenty years after Samuel received the message of doom for Eli and his sons, when that doom should be realized. The sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were with the ark of the covenant in the battle, and were slain by the Philistines, who captured the ark. The sudden death of Eli at Shiloh, when the news of the capture of the ark came to him, and the death of his sons in battle came about because of his own unfaithfulness and that of his sons.

LESSON IX

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Feb. 22.—Samuel, the victorious leader.—1 Sam. 7: 3-17. Tu.—Terror in Philistia.—1 Sam. 5: 1-12. Wed.—Return of the ark.—1 Sam. 6: 7-16. Th.—Samuel's farewell.—1 Sam. 12: 1-12. Fr.—Exhortation to faithfulness.—1 Sam. 12: 13-25. Sat.—Trust and deliverance.—Psa. 123, 124. Su.—Thanksgiving for deliverance.—Psa. 116.

Samuel, the Victorious Leader.—1 Samuel 7: 3-17.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 11, 12)

SUPT.—3 And Sam'u-el spake unto all the house of Is'ra-el, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ash'ta-roth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Phil'is-tines.

School.—4 Then the children of Is'ra-el did put away Ba'a-lim and Ash'ta-roth, and served the Lord only.

5 And Sam'u-el said, Gather all Is'ra-el to Miz'peh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord.

6 And they gathered together to Miz'peh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord. And Sam'u-el judged the children of Is'ra-el in Miz'peh.

7 And when the Phil'is-tines heard that the children of Is'ra-el were gathered together to Miz'peh, the lords of the Phil'is-tines went up against Is'ra-el. And when the children of Is'ra-el heard it, they were afraid of the Phil'is-tines.

8 And the children of Is'ra-el said to Sam'u-el, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Phil'is-tines.

9 And Sam'u-el took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord: and Sam'u-el cried unto the Lord for Is'ra-el; and the Lord heard him.

10 And as Sam'u-el was offering up the burnt offering, the Phil'is-tines drew near to battle against Is'ra-el: but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Phil'is-tines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Is'ra-el.

11 And the men of Is'ra-el went out of Miz'peh, and pursued the Phil'is-tines, and smote them, until they came under Beth'-car.

12 Then Sam'u-el took a stone, and set it between Miz'peh and Shen, and called the name of it Eb-en-e'zer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

13 So the Phil'is-tines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Is'ra-el: and the hand of the Lord was against the Phil'is-tines all the days of Sam'u-el.

14 And the cities which the Phil'is-tines had taken from Is'ra-el were restored to Is'ra-el, from Ek'ron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Is'ra-el deliver out of the hands of the Phil'is-tines. And there was peace between Is'ra-el and the Am'o-rites.

15 And Sam'u-el judged Is'ra-el all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth'-el, and Gil'gal, and Miz'peh, and judged Is'ra-el in all those places.

17 And his return was to Ra'mah; for there was his house; and there he judged Is'ra-el; and there he built an altar unto the Lord.

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3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. 4 Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only.

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah. 6 And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah. 7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. 9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Jehovah: and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel; and Jehovah answered him. 10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel. 11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us. 13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel: and the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. 14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the border thereof did Israel deliver out of the hand of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. 16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpah; and he judged Israel in all those places. 17 And his return was to Ramah, for there was his house; and there he judged Israel: and he built there an altar unto Jehovah.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. 1 Sam. 7: 12.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord sends help to those who humble themselves.**

TOPIC.—**Israel's return to God.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Preparation. II. Victory. III. A noble life.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1100.**

PLACES.—**Ramah, Samuel's home; Mizpeh, the place of assembly; Ebenezer, the place of the battle.**

INTRODUCTION.—After the Philistines had captured the ark of the covenant, they took it to one of their principal cities, Ashdod, and placed it in the temple of their god Dagon. The next morning Dagon was found fallen down. It was set up and on the following morning it was found not only fallen down, but badly broken. The Philistines were much troubled by the presence of the ark among them. The fifth and sixth chapters of 1 Samuel describe the experiences they had with it and its return to the Israelites. This period of about twenty years, from the return of

the ark to the time treated of in the present lesson, was a dark one in Israel's history.

COMMENTARY.—I. PREPARATION (vs. 3-8). **3. Samuel**—He had been judge of Israel from the death of Eli. He was preparing the people for the reformation that was about to be accomplished. "When the right moment came and the desire for better things sprang up as the fruit of his prophetic labors, he was ready to take his place as the leader of the nation."—*Cam. Bib.* **spake unto all the house of Israel**—The influence of Samuel's piety and efforts extended to the various tribes of Israel. Most of the judges exerted an influence over a few tribes, but Samuel gained a hold upon the whole nation. **put away the foreign gods** (*R. V.*)—There was a disposition on the part of Israel to return to the God of Israel, and this purpose was to be manifested by giving up the gods of the heathen. **prepare your hearts unto the Lord**—"Direct your hearts unto Jehovah."—*R. V.* They were not only to forsake all other deities, but they were to seek and serve the true God and him only. **he will deliver you**—The declaration is definite and positive. If Israel would meet the conditions, they would be saved from the oppression of the Philistines, under which they had suffered for forty years. **4. did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth**—It was a long step in advance when the people of Israel put away foreign gods. They were on the way to victory. Baalim is the plural of Baal and Ashtaroth is the plural of Ashtoreth.

5. gather all Israel to Mizpeh—Mizpeh denotes a watch-tower. It is thought it was about five miles northwest of Jerusalem, but there is a difference of opinion as to its location. Some would place it at Scopus, a hill a mile northeast of Jerusalem. This assembly of the people was for the purpose of getting ready to throw off the Philistine yoke. Samuel would pray for Israel as they were thus gathered. **6. drew water, and poured it out**—This act indicated penitence. It also may have had the force of a pledge to God on the part of the people to serve him. **fasted**—In token of their contrition and determination. **we have sinned against the Lord**—The people publicly confessed their sins and thus humbled themselves before the Lord. They turned from strange gods, turned toward the Lord, repented, and confessed their sins. **Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh**—He declared to the people the course they must take to secure the divine favor and obtain liberty from the Philistine oppression. It is probable that he acted also as a civil magistrate. **7. Philistines heard,** etc.—They supposed that the gathering together of the Israelites was a warlike movement. They had gathered to humble themselves before the Lord and seek his help, and naturally the next step would be to make preparations to gain the victory over their oppressors. **lords of the Philistines**—The leaders of the nation. **went up against Israel**—They hastened to put down any insurrection that might be planned by Israel. **were afraid of the Philistines**—The Israelites had experienced in the past to their sorrow the strength of their enemy. **8. cease not to cry unto the Lord**—In their fear and distress, since they had humbled themselves before the Lord, they saw that their only safety was in getting help from God.

II. VICTORY (vs. 9-14). **9. a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord**—The "sucking lamb" must have been at least seven days old (Lev. 22:27), and was offered whole, that is, it was not divided. "The whole animal was burned upon the altar to denote the entire consecration to Jehovah of those who were pleading for deliverance."—*Cam. Bib.* **Samuel cried unto the Lord**—The work he had been doing for Israel for years was proving effective. The nation had reached a stage of reformation where their prayers would be heard. Samuel prayed in faith, "and the Lord heard him." **10. drew near to battle**—In the midst of the religious ceremony the Philistines advanced to attack Israel, who were unorganized and unprepared for battle. From a human standpoint the advantage was wholly on the side of the Philistines. **the Lord thundered with a great thunder**—The language is forceful. It gives prominence to the divine agency. It declares the great violence of the storm, which threw the Philistine army into confusion. "This amazing miracle was wrought in answer to Samuel's prayer, and was a confirmation of his words to Israel as recorded in verse 3."—*Whedon.* **smitten before Israel**—Heretofore Israel had been smitten before the Philistines. **11. pursued the Philistines**—They followed up the advantage the Lord gave them. **under Beth-car**—The exact location is unknown, but must have been west or southwest of Mizpeh toward the Philistines' country. **12. called the name of it Eben-ezer**—Samuel would commemorate the victory and at the same time ascribe the glory to God.

13. the Lord was against the Philistines—The oppression of forty years was at an end, and the Lord kept the Philistines from making inroads into Israel's territory. **14. cities....were restored**—Samuel's administration was a vigorous one. He succeeded in breaking the enemy's power in those cities which had been wrested from Israel. **from Ekron even unto Gath**—The cities between the two places named were restored to Israel. Ekron and Gath remained in the hands of the Philistines. **Amorites**—Not only did the Lord give deliverance to Israel from the Philistines, but he gave them rest from the Amorites, Israel's most powerful enemy, next to the Philistines. They were the inhabitants of the highlands of Judah and Ephraim.

III. A NOBLE LIFE (vs. 15-17). **15. Samuel judged Israel**—He was a prophet as well as a judge. The Lord spoke to him and he delivered the messages to those for whom they were given. He was regarded with reverence by the people. As a judge he was far-seeing and impartial. As a man of God he had great power in prayer. He accomplished for the people of Israel that for which he was raised up. **all the days of his life**—In his old age Samuel made his sons judges, but they were only his assistants, while he retained his judicial office. Saul was made king while Samuel lived, but Samuel continued to execute his office to a considerable extent. **16. Beth-el**—About eight miles north of Jerusalem. **Gilgal**—East of Jericho. Samuel passed from place to place and thus gave the people opportunity to bring their cases before him. **17. Ramah**—A city a few miles north of Jerusalem.

QUESTIONS.—What exhortation did Samuel give to Israel? What reform took place in Israel? How did the Israelites show their return to the Lord? Where did they assemble and for what purpose? Why did the Philistines come up? How did the Lord put the Philistines to confusion? How did Samuel commemorate the victory of Israel? What was the effect of this victory?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The captured ark of the covenant. (1) In the house of Dagŏn. (2) In Gath. (3) Among the Ekronites. (4) A burden upon the Philistines. (5) Sent back to the territory of Israel. (6) The penalty for looking into the ark. (7) In the house of Abinadab. 2. It was twenty years from the defeat of Israel at Ebenezer to their triumph over the Philistines there. 3. The relations between Israel and the Philistines during this time.

II. THEME.—Israel's repentance and triumph.

III. TURNING TOWARD THE LORD.—1. Israel's punishment for idolatry was deserved. 2. A desire for relief from the oppression of the Philistines. 3. The influence of Samuel's administration over Israel in bringing about a reform. 4. The desire to turn toward the Lord. 5. Steps in turning toward the Lord. (1) Putting away strange gods. (2) Directing the heart toward God. (3) Serving the Lord only. 6. The promise of deliverance.

IV. VICTORY THROUGH DIVINE HELP.—1. The gathering at Mizpeh. (1) Penitence and vows. (2) Fasting. (3) Sacrifice and prayer. (4) The Philistines feared this gathering might mean an uprising against them. 2. The fear the Israelites had of the Philistines. 3. Philistines offering battle while the Israelites were at worship. 4. God's way of defeating the Philistines. 5. The extent of the victory. 6. The results of the victory. (1) A lasting relief. (2) Cities restored. 7. A memorial of the victory.

V. SAMUEL'S NOBLE LIFE.—1. A man for the hour. 2. A lifelong judgeship. 3. A man of deep convictions. 4. He was thoroughly religious. 5. He was fearless. 6. He became a counselor of kings. 7. From early life devoted to the Lord.

Practical Survey

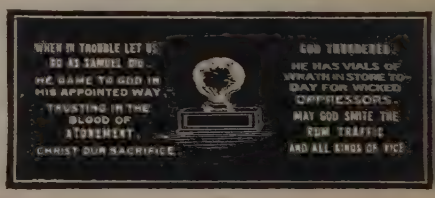
TOPIC.—**Israel's return to God.**

I. Embraced true religious reform.
II. Established national unity.

I. Embraced true religious reform. When the time came to utter the word of the Lord in the full maturity of his powers and to take the leadership of the nation, Samuel stood ready. Penetrating to the deepest source of their defeat, Samuel placed the recognition of Jehovah at the basis of all national reform. He addressed all the tribes with a voice of moral authority that recalled the admonitions of Moses and the last words of Joshua. Samuel had force of will to resist the tide of evil and to bid it recede. He distinctly charged the house of Israel with having gone astray from the living God. Their idolatry was not a mere fancy nor a mere selfish indulgence. It was an insult, a dishonor to their God. Therefore Samuel's first great act as prophet-judge was to call the people to a thorough religious and moral cleansing, embracing purity of heart, temperance in spirit, chastity of body and righteousness one toward another. The steps leading to this must be a hearty renunciation of all idols, the confession of sin in humiliation of spirit and by special prayer. Renunciation of sin combined with positive acts of obedience was the order of things. Upon their sincere repentance a new order began. National repentance was followed by a national assembly. A most important part of the prophetic office was to maintain the spiritual character of the Hebrew worship, and to prevent degeneracy of the people into ritualism. Israel's experience of defeat and oppression had taught them their own weakness and cured their presumption. Their urgent request of Samuel for prayer in their behalf was an evidence of their reliance on Jehovah. Where Israel experienced an overwhelming defeat twenty years before, they now gained a signal victory and were restored from apostasy. That victory was achieved at the throne of grace by Samuel's intercession. He was the means of Israel's help. As soon as the lamb was slain the blessing began to descend upon Israel and the curse upon their foes. Under Samuel, without the ark or any symbol of the divine presence, Israel's enemies were destroyed and the penitent people delivered. Twenty years before on that field Israel was defeated. There Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's wicked sons, were slain.

II. Established national unity. Samuel was first a prophet, then a faithful priest and finally a ruler and judge. He officiated as priest and ruled as judge. His policy was one of peace. Idolatry was banished. The principles of the theocracy were confirmed. Order, justice and peace were established. Closer unity prevailed among the tribes of Israel, so that they again became a nation. In Israel every revival of religion was succeeded by national prosperity and political independence. The power of the enemy was broken. The Lord was their defense. Lost territory was restored. Far-reaching peace was established. Samuel's protracted labor was an evidence of his public spirit. It was the principal means of raising the nation to its subsequent power and glory. Samuel led the people through two revolutions, one religious, the other political. He closely associated the throne with the altar, earthly power with piety, the good of the country with the glory of God. He connected the official with the personal so intimately that he could not be a godly man without also being an upright judge. Under his government piety flourished, the stream of justice ran pure, the rights of all classes were respected, private property was safe and the public burdens were borne by a prosperous people. Samuel was a judge who built up a kingdom of righteousness. He knew the need of establishing order and discipline under the sacred law. His residence was conspicuously a center of religious influence. There the altar proclaimed to the tribes of Israel that piety was to be the character and the will of God the rule of his government. Samuel ruled by virtue of what he was in himself and he had the ability because of his early training and continuous growth of character. Through him an orderly and beneficent civil administration, diligently maintained on religious principles, was enjoyed by the various tribes of Israel. T. B. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The revival sermon. "And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines" (v. 3). Plain, pointed preaching is a necessary condition for revivals. Jonah was sent to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh. John the Baptist came preaching repentance in the wilderness of Judea. It was during the reign of Alexander VI, one of the worst of the popes, that Savonarola commenced preaching in Florence in 1495. The aspect of the city was completely changed. The women threw aside their jewels and finery, dressed plainly, and bore themselves with modesty. Licentious young Florentines were transformed into sober, religious men. Hymns took the place of Lorenzo's carnival songs. Bankers and tradesmen were impelled by conscience to restore ill-gotten gains, amounting to many thousand florins. The churches were packed with praying people, while the poor were provided for. It was a wonderful transformation produced by the faithful preaching of the word and plain rebuking of sin.

The revival confession. "And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord" (v. 6). True repentance is evidenced by confession of sin. During the time of the Scotch reformation the leaders summoned the people to meet in Edinburgh. They assembled in the Grayfriar's churchyard to the number of sixty thousand. Alexander Henderson stood up in their midst, and, in a prayer of wonderful power and pathos, confessed the nation's sins, and their desire to return to the Lord and the purity of worship commanded in his word. The covenant was then produced and a pause ensued, each waiting for the other as more worthy to head the list of subscribers. At length the venerable Earl of Sutherland stepped forward, and, with trembling hand, signed Scotland's covenant with God. Others pressed up until there was no more room for signatures. When will this nation make its confession and sign its covenant with God?

The revival prayer. "And Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him" (v. 9). The men who have been the most successful in leading souls to Christ and in the upbuilding of the church, have been men of prayer. Bishop Asbury said, "I propose to rise at four o'clock as often as I can and spend two hours in prayer and meditation." Bishop Ken was in prayer before three every morning and he was with God so much that it was said his soul was God-enamored. Joseph Alleine rose at four o'clock and prayed till eight. John Welch, the holy Scotch preacher, was not satisfied unless he spent eight or ten hours in prayer. Brainerd's whole life was a life of prayer. "A prayerless ministry is the undertaker for all God's truth and for God's church. He may have the most costly casket and the most beautiful flowers, but it is a funeral notwithstanding the charmful array. A prayerless Christian will never learn God's truth; a prayerless ministry will never be able to teach God's truth."

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The Lord helps the humble and the trustful.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Turning to the Lord { Repenting / Confessing / Trusting

A GREAT VICTORY

In distress. To keep in mind how dreadful it is not to have the favor of God, review the last lesson, recalling the penalty carried out upon Eli and his sons and upon the Israelites. Tell the story of the capture of the ark of the covenant which the Israelites had unadvisedly carried into the battle. Read the intervening chapters to get the story of the ark during the twenty years between the defeat of Israel at Ebenezer, when the ark was captured, and the events of the present lesson. Let the children tell about the boy Samuel and his devotion to the Lord during his long life. The Israelites were in trouble because they had sinned against God. The Philistines were making life uncomfortable for them. Samuel was God's man and God told him what to do. He was teaching the people what they ought to do and was trying to lead them to serve the Lord.

Turning to the Lord. The people of Israel began to wish the Lord would help them out of their distress, and desired to turn toward the Lord. Samuel told them what they must do if they were to receive help from the Lord. Let the class tell how a mother helps her boy to get right if he has been doing wrong. He has told a lie, perhaps, and goes to bed with the burden of that lie upon his heart. He calls his mother to him and says he is lonesome and can not go to sleep. She asks him what the trouble is. He tells her what he has done, and she asks him if he is sorry and is going to do it any more. He asks his mother to forgive him, for he had told the lie to her. He believes she does forgive him and he is relieved. He thus repented, confessed and trusted. Notice the things that Samuel told the Israelites they must do if they would return to the Lord. They must turn from strange gods, must direct their hearts unto the Lord and must serve him only. The people confessed their sins and asked Samuel to pray. Tell the story of the Pharisee and the publican who went up to the temple to pray, showing why the publican was blessed and saved and the Pharisee was not. The publican was penitent.

A great victory. Notice that it was while the Israelites were having meeting that the Philistine army came up to fight against them. Samuel had prayed for help and his prayer was heard, but neither he nor the people knew how the Lord was going to answer. Just at the right time God sent the great thunderstorm that put the Philistines to flight. They fled before the Israelites, who pursued them toward their country. The reason the Israelites won so great a victory was because they sought the Lord with all their hearts. The Lord continued to help them against their enemies. Samuel was a judge in Israel many years after this.

D.D.No. 268.6 AR6

LESSON X

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Mar. 1.—Saul anointed king.—1 Sam. 9:17-10:1. Tu.—Demand for a king.—1 Sam. 8:1-9. Wed.—Samuel's warning.—1 Sam. 8:10-22. Th.—Choice of a leader.—1 Sam. 9:1-16. Fr.—Saul among the prophets.—1 Sam. 10:2-13. Sat.—The ideal king.—Deut. 17:14-20. Su.—Anointed for service.—Isa. 44:24-45:7.

Saul Anointed King.—1 Samuel 8: 1-10: 27. Print 9: 17-10: 1.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verse, 1)

SUPT.—17 And when Sam'u-el saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

School.—18 Then Saul drew near to Sam'u-el in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

19 And Sam'u-el answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart.

20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Is'ra-el? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?

21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Ben'ja-mite, of the smallest of the tribes of Is'ra-el? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Ben'ja-min? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

22 And Sam'u-el took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons.

23 And Sam'u-el said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee.

24 And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Sam'u-el said, Behold that which is left! set it before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Sam'u-el that day.

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Sam'u-el communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Sam'u-el called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Sam'u-el, abroad.

27 And as they were going down to the end of the city, Sam'u-el said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

1 Then Sam'u-el took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?

*AMERICAN REVISION

17 And when Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah said unto him, Behold, the man of whom I spake to thee! this same shall have authority over my people. 18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. 19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer; go up before me unto the high place, for ye shall eat with me to-day: and in the morning I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thy heart. 20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for thee, and for all thy father's house? 21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me after this manner?

22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the guest-chamber, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, who were about thirty persons. 23 And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. 24 And the cook took up the thigh, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold, that which hath been reserved! set it before thee and eat; because unto the appointed time hath it been kept for thee, for I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, he communed with Saul upon the housetop. 26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day that Samuel called to Saul on the house top, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad. 27 As they were going down at the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us (and he passed on), but stand thou still first, that I may cause thee to hear the word of God.

1 Then Samuel took the vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not that Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance?

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Fear God. Honour the king. 1 Peter 2:17.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—God calls choice men for extraordinary work.

TOPIC.—**National revolution.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Asking for a king. II. Saul and Samuel meet. III. Saul anointed king. IV. Saul proclaimed king.**

TIME.—**B. C. 1095.**

PLACE.—**Ramah.**

INTRODUCTION.—The old order of things, the government of Israel by judges, was about to pass away, and the new, the government by kings, was to be inaugurated. Samuel, the last judge, was to be the providential and trusted mediator in effecting this change. He was God's prophet, and to him were entrusted weighty messages for the people.

COMMENTARY.—I. ASKING FOR A KING (8:1-22). It can not be known definitely how long it was after the great victory of Israel over the Philistines at Ebenezer, that the demand was made for a king. During Samuel's old age he called upon his sons to share the responsibility of the judgeship with him, and made them judges in the southern part of the land. Joel and Abiah, Samuel's sons, were far from possessing the excellent qualities of their father. They were partial in their judicial decisions and were guilty of accepting bribes. The elders of

Israel were so displeased with their conduct that they went to Samuel and told him of the evil conduct of his sons, and asked him to give them a king, such as the nations about them had. Samuel knew that it was God's will that Israel should be ruled by judges and that the theocracy should continue. He was grieved at their demand for a king, and went to the Lord in prayer regarding the matter. The Lord assured Samuel that the people were not rejecting him as judge, but were rejecting himself and told him to listen to the demand of Israel for a king. He should tell them plainly, however, what they must expect from a king. Samuel carried the Lord's message to the people and told them how a king would oppress them.

II. SAUL AND SAMUEL MEET (9:1-24). **1-14.** The Lord knew where to put his hand upon a man whom he could make king of Israel. Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, was "a mighty man of power," and he had a son who was "a choice young man." He was a head taller than the rest of the people. If Israel desired a powerful man as king, then surely Saul would meet their demands. It was a peculiar train of providences that brought Saul to Samuel's notice. Kish had a herd of asses, and these animals were highly prized then, and are still in the East. They had strayed away, and naturally Saul was sent, and a servant with him, to find them. Saul failed to find the asses, but he found Samuel, whom the Lord would have him meet.

15, 16. Just the day before this, the Lord had told Samuel that on the next day he would send to him the man who was to reign over the people, and he should anoint him king. **17. Samuel saw Saul**—God's appointments were perfectly timed. Saul arrived at Ramah at the right time. Samuel was expecting the future king to appear then. Samuel would know that Saul was the man, for God at once assured him. **shall reign over my people**—Literally, "Shall restrain my people." A peculiar word, contrasting the restraints of a settled government with the license of the time in which "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25).—*Kirkpatrick.* **18. where the seer's house is**—Saul's one desire was to learn where his father's asses were; he was seeking these and not a kingdom. He thought the seer would be able to help him locate the lost animals. **19. the high place**—Samuel had erected an altar unto the Lord (Judges 7:17), and it was probably on the high place here mentioned. God had said that there should be but one center of worship, but the condition of affairs in Israel was unsettled, and it may have been permissible to have altars aside from the one at the tabernacle. **ye shall eat with me to day**—Samuel had already honored Saul by bidding him go up before him, and he further honored him by acting as his host. This was entirely unexpected by Saul. **all that is in thine heart**—Samuel would at once tell Saul about the lost asses, but not until the next day would he make known to him his great work. Saul may have had some sort of intimation from within that he was to perform an important service for his nation. **20. they are found**—Saul desired to know about the lost animals, and he found out, but he learned much more. Samuel was a seer, but he knew about the asses because the Lord told him, and he told him not only to relieve Saul's mind, but to assure him of the authority he had in giving him a message from the Lord. **on whom is all the desire of Israel**—The desire of Israel was for a king, and since Saul was the man whom God had chosen, the people's desire was toward him, though they did not know whom God would give them. **21. the smallest of the tribes of Israel**—The tribe of Benjamin had been all but exterminated about three centuries before.

22. into the parlour—"Into the guest-chamber."—*R. V.* **chiefest place**—This is a double superlative. It indicates that the place of highest honor was given to Saul. **that were bidden**—It was the occasion of a sacrificial feast. "About thirty persons" were invited by Samuel to eat with him in the house, and these, probably, were the most distinguished people of the company present. The rest ate outside. **23. bring the portion**—We note from this verse that Samuel was expecting the future king to come to him on this day, and had, accordingly, given directions to have a particularly choice portion reserved for the distinguished guest. **24. took up the shoulder**—The right leg was the priest's portion, and would fall to Samuel. He reserved this for Saul as a mark of honor.

III. SAUL ANOINTED KING (9:25-10:1). **25. communed with Saul**—Nothing is said regarding the nature of the conversation. We may reasonably suppose that they spoke of the condition and needs of the nation. **upon the top of the house**—The flat roofs of Oriental houses are much used as places for rest, conversation and sleeping. It has been suggested that upon the housetop Samuel and Saul could be readily seen, and the people present would know the honor conferred upon Saul by the prophet. **26. the spring of the day**—The rising of the day, or dawn. **abroad**—Out of the house. **27. bid the servant pass on**—That Samuel might be alone with Saul. **that I may shew thee the word of God**—The time had now come for Samuel to make fully known to Saul the fact of his divine appointment as king. **1. vial of oil**—The Hebrew is emphatic, "the flask of oil"; probably the holy anointing oil described in Exod. 30:23-33, which Samuel had prepared for this express purpose.—*Whedon.* **poured it upon his head**—By this act Saul was set apart for a distinctive work, as men were set apart by this ceremony to the priesthood.

IV. SAUL PROCLAIMED KING (10:2-27). As Saul was leaving Samuel, he was told of three signs that would confirm to him the message he had received from the Lord through Samuel. He would meet men by Rachel's tomb who would report the finding of his father's asses. He would meet three men going up to Bethel, who would give him bread. As a third sign he would meet a company of prophets and he himself would prophesy and would be changed into another man. Samuel later called the people of Israel together at Mizpeh and explained to them that the reason a king would be given was that they had rejected God. Saul was chosen by lot as king. This was in harmony with what had already been done. The people acknowledged him as their king. The inhabitants of Gibeah, however, would not honor him.

QUESTIONS.—Why did the children of Israel ask for a king? What had been the nature of the government? What directions did the Lord give Samuel regarding their demand for a king? Explain how Saul came to meet Samuel. How did Samuel treat Saul? Describe the anointing of Saul. What signs did Samuel give to Saul? Describe the meeting at Mizpeh. How did the people of Gibeah treat Saul?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. A review of the more important judges of Israel. 2. Israel was under divine government during the period of the judges, in that God raised up the different judges. 3. The Lord appointed judges for united Israel. 4. In what sense God rules among the nations now. 5. God's attitude toward governments and rulers. 6. Samuel's part in the transition from rule by judges to rule by kings.

II. Theme.—Israel becoming a kingdom.

III. A kingdom demanded.—1. Samuel's excellent administration. 2. His appointment of his sons to assist him. 3. The evil disposition of his sons. (1) Guilty of taking bribes. (2) Were unjust in their decisions. 4. The complaint of the people against them. 5. The trouble caused by the oppression of the Philistines led Israel to demand a king who would break their power. 6. Samuel's feelings regarding the demand for a king and his appeal to God. 7. God's will for Israel. 8. God's permission for Israel to have a king.

IV. A king found.—1. The mystery of God's providences. 2. Note the factors entering into the proclamation of Saul as king. (1) Kish's asses strayed away. (2) The search for them by Saul. (3) The animals not easily found. (4) The search ended at Ramah where Samuel was. (5) God's word to Samuel about Saul. (6) The meeting between Samuel and Saul. 3. God's ability to put his hand upon fit men.

V. A king proclaimed.—1. The anointing oil poured upon Saul set him apart for the kingship of Israel. 2. The change that came over Saul. 3. His humility and timidity. 4. Appointed by God and then chosen by lot. 5. Proclaimed king at Mizpeh and acknowledged. 6. Opposition to Saul. 7. The kingdom was established under favorable circumstances.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**National revolution.**

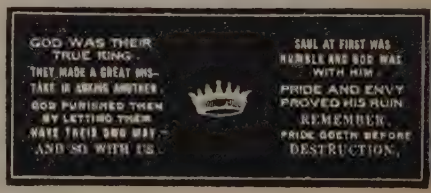
I. A rejection of divine sovereignty.
II. Based on international rivalry.

I. A rejection of divine sovereignty. Israel's demand for a king was made in a constitutional manner and came before Samuel with all the weight of a formal decision on the part of the representatives of the nation. We can scarcely imagine the feelings of Samuel as he heard their desire expressed. The tide of popular feeling did not swerve him, but he was deeply wounded by Israel's evident aversion to God's time and ways. Their proceedings were premature and hasty and conducted without reference to the will of God. Israel's wish to have a king to lead them out to battle betrayed a thirst for war and a distrust of the Lord's power to defend them. Decline in the theocratic belief and life was ever the one sign of weakness in the Hebrew commonwealth. Much of his life-work seemed to Samuel to be wasted unless the form of government under which he had brought the land to prosperity continued. The Jewish nation could not appreciate Samuel. His intense and consistent godliness was not popular among them. Their moral status was unworthy of the free government God had given them. Samuel's strong, pure character towered in magnificent sublimity above the fickle, selfish age in which he lived. When his ungrateful country called him to resign his office as judge after long years of honorable and acceptable service and to yield his authority to another, Samuel did not resent or complain. His conduct sets before us the wisdom of timely concession, the nobility of self-renunciation. Though Israel's request was an affront to Samuel, he never seemed so great as in the last scenes of his public life. He towered high above the infirmities of ignoble minds. The Lord explained the case to Samuel and told him what to do. Samuel found relief for his burdened heart, sympathy under bitter disappointment, guidance in great perplexity, submission to the Lord, strength for painful duty, composure amid general excitement and confidence in a glorious future. God assured Samuel that while the people professed deep concern about the moral depravity of Samuel's sons and the welfare of the nation, they were, in reality, casting off their God. He was reminded that this was not a new case of sudden refusal of the divine sovereignty. It was an outburst of an hereditary vice. It was essential apostasy, practical idolatry.

II. Based on international rivalry. The elders of Israel were actuated solely by political motives. In vain did Samuel warn them of the disapproval of God and the costs of their desired monarchy. Their desire to rival and compete with other nations was lessening their connection with Jehovah as ruler. The basis of their revolution was in effect their rejection of a theocracy for a constitutional monarchy. Israel resented the thought of being considered in any way inferior to the surrounding nations. Only a man of ripened wisdom could have presided over so far-reaching a change. Personal humiliation was lost sight of in Samuel's desire to save Israel from the full consequence of their sins. He gave his services as prophet as faithfully when the question was injurious to himself as on any occasion. Having ascertained the will of the Lord concerning his people, Samuel aimed at nothing but to carry it into effect with courtesy, tenderness, dignity and grace. Infallible wisdom guided Samuel and Saul in their meeting, preparatory to kingly rule in Israel. Saul's appointment was of God, and the purpose of it was the deliverance of his people. Samuel found much that was good in Saul: reverence for his father, diligence in business, modesty and humility. He was warm-hearted, dignified and sincere. He exhibited no vanity upon his elevation. His conduct gave promise of a bright future. The true purpose of life was unfolded to Saul by Samuel. Everything was calculated to impress on Saul that his elevation to the royal dignity was not simply good fortune, but he and the people must see the hand of God in it.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The dangers of the second best (8:7). "God's second gifts are for those who will not have the best; his best gifts are for those who will have nothing else." The highest point of efficient service for Christ is reached when we learn to pray, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). The perfection of patience is reached when we have learned to wait for God to prove himself. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). Paul prayed three times that the thorn in his flesh might be removed; but he had to learn that sustaining grace in affliction was better than exemption from suffering. Israel prayed for a king; the prayer was answered, but leanness came to their souls. An old fable tells how a mountain stream began to feel weary of being a simple brook, and so asked for snows from the mountains, water from the torrents, rain from the tempests, until, its petitions granted, it burst its bounds and ravaged its hitherto delightsome banks. At first the proud stream exulted in its force, but, soon seeing that it carried desolation in its flow, that its progress was now doomed to solitude, and that its waters were turbid, it came to pine for the humble bed hollowed out for it by nature, the birds, the flowers, the trees, and the brooks, hitherto the modest companions of its tranquil course. Be sure you are not praying for wrong things. God is interested in our having the best he has for us and will inspire our prayers to that end.

The call to kingship. "And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God" (9:27). This revelation of the word was Saul's call to be king. The revelation of the word to us is the same. "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" (Rev. 1:6). In bestowing this spiritual kingship, God gives the grace of holy living as well as the gifts of kingship. Saul had the latter but was wanting in the former. All about us are the elemental forces of the universe, physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual. What we can do with them is the test of our power. As the kingdom of God is to be within us, he is truly great who is truly good. Early in the Civil War, before General Robert E. Lee had proved his preeminence as a general, he was severely criticized on more than one occasion by a General Whiting. Whiting had stood at the head of his class at West Point, and was considered a bright and capable man. One day President Davis, wishing an officer for an important command, called upon General Lee for advice. "What do you think of Whiting?" Lee answered without hesitation, commending Whiting as one of the ablest men in the army, well qualified in every way for even the most important place. One of the officers present was greatly surprised, and at the first opportunity drew Lee aside. "Don't you know what unkind things Whiting has been saying about you?" "I understood," Lee answered, "that the president desired to know my opinion of Whiting, not Whiting's opinion of me." "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13). The call to service in the kingdom is a call to honor and exaltation according to the standard of God's word.

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—God has a place for every one who will serve him.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

A KING IN ISRAEL

Saul { Obedient to his father
Respectful to God's prophet
A choice young man

A king in Israel. Do any in the class know what a king is? Can they tell the name of any king who is reigning now? Explain the place a king holds in the government and what he does. Tell stories of some of the judges of Israel. Refer to the good life of Samuel. He began to serve the Lord when he was a young child, and he served him all his life. He did the best he could for his nation. Tell about Samuel's two sons. Samuel wanted them to be good and serve the Lord. They did not follow their father's example and were very unlike him. After they were appointed by Samuel to help him judge Israel, they were not honest. The people were not satisfied, and they wanted a king. They desired to be like the nations about them. Show the children that it is not best always to want to be like other children and do as they do, for they may be doing wrong. It would have been God's way to have Israel ruled by judges, but the people wanted a king, so God permitted them to have one.

An obedient young man. Tell the story of Kish's animals having strayed away, and Saul's being sent to find them. Some of the class may live in the country and may know about looking for a lost cow or horse. When Saul was told by his father to go and look for the lost animals, he went away to do as his father said. He searched and inquired, but could not find them. He was obedient and he was anxious to find his father's property.

Saul and Samuel. Show how the Lord was working with Saul and Samuel to bring them together. Draw a circle on the board to represent the place where Samuel was, and then draw a crooked line ending in the circle to represent the route over which Saul passed to reach the place. Samuel was a prophet and Saul thought a prophet knew more than he himself did, and wished to find him and ask him about the lost animals. Saul was respectful to the prophet of the Lord. Give the story of Saul's stay with Samuel. Note the fact that the Lord told Samuel one day ahead that he who was to be king in Israel would come to him the next day. It was a surprise to Saul to be anointed king.

A choice young man. Let the class tell you what they think a boy or girl would have to be or do in order to be a choice boy or girl. They would need to be truthful, honest, helpful, pleasant, obedient, industrious. Saul was a choice young man and the Lord chose him to be his special servant, a king of his people. Note the fact that although Saul was a choice young man, he was changed into another man when the Spirit came upon him. We need to receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts to make us just what we ought to be. Tell how humble Saul was as he hid among the stuff.

LESSON XI

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Mar. 8.—Saul gains his kingdom.—1 Sam. 11. Tu.—Saul chosen king.—1 Sam. 10: 17-27. Wed.—Saul's sacrifice.—1 Sam. 13: 1-9. Th.—Israel's peril.—1 Sam. 13: 10-23. Fr.—Human and divine authority.—Luke 20: 19-26. Sat.—Obedience to rulers.—Rom. 13: 1-7. Su.—Boldness of obedience.—Acts 4: 5-22.

Saul Gains His Kingdom.—1 Samuel 11: 1-15.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 12, 13)

SUPT.—1 Then Na'hash the Am'mon-ite came up, and encamped against Ja-besh-gil'e-ad: and all the men of Ja'besh said unto Na'hash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

School.—2 And Na'hash the Am'mon-ite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Is'ra-el.

3 And the elders of Ja'besh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Is'ra-el: and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

4 Then came the messengers to Gib'e-ah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

5 And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Ja'besh.

6 And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Is'ra-el by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Sam'u-el, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

8 And when he numbered them in Be'zek, the children of Is'ra-el were three hundred thousand, and the men of Ju'dah thirty thousand.

9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Ja-besh-gil'e-ad, To morrow, by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed it to the men of Ja'besh; and they were glad.

10 Therefore the men of Ja'besh said, To morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.

11 And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Am'mon-ites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

12 And the people said unto Sam'u-el, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.

13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Is'ra-el.

14 Then said Sam'u-el to the people, Come, and let us go to Gil'gal, and renew the kingdom there.

15 And all the people went to Gil'gal; and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gil'gal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Is'ra-el rejoiced greatly.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee. 2 And Nahash the Ammonite said unto them, On this condition will I make it with you, that all your right eyes be put out; and I will lay it for a reproach upon all Israel. 3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the borders of Israel; and then, if there be none to save us, we will come out to thee. 4 Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and spake these words in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voice, and wept. 5 And, behold, Saul came following the oxen out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh.

6 And the Spirit of God came mightily upon Saul when he heard those words, and his anger was kindled greatly. 7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the borders of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the dread of Jehovah fell on the people, and they came out as one man. 8 And he numbered them in Bezek; and the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. 9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by the time the sun is hot, ye shall have deliverance. And the messengers came and told the men of Jabesh; and they were glad. 10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you. 11 And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and smote the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they that remained were scattered, so that not two of them were left together.

12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. 13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day Jehovah hath wrought deliverance in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. 15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before Jehovah in Gilgal; and there they offered sacrifices of peace-offerings before Jehovah; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. Prov. 16: 32.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**Courage and large-heartedness go well together.**

TOPIC.—**Invasion of Israel.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Jabesh-Gilead's appeal. II. The response. III. Victory over the Ammonites. IV. Saul's kingship recognized.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1095.**

PLACES.—**Jabesh-Gilead; Gibeah; Bezek.**

INTRODUCTION.—Saul had been privately anointed king by Samuel at Ramah. He had been elected and proclaimed king by the assembly at Mizpeh. He had been despised by some of his people. He had not yet become established in his kingdom, and was engaged in his ordinary occupation. A peculiar train of providences had resulted in his being placed in the position he then held, and other providences would bring to him full recognition of his kingship on the part of Israel.

COMMENTARY.—I. Jabesh-Gilead's appeal (vs. 1-5). **1. Nahash the Ammonite came up**—We have no means of knowing how soon after Saul was made king, Nahash, king of the Ammonites, made his threat against Jabesh-Gilead. It was probably only a short time. From 1 Sam. 12:12 we learn that before Saul's appointment as king, Nahash threatened to attack Israel, and that led Israel to ask for a king. The Ammonites were descendants of Lot and their territory was south and east of the Israelitish settlements on the east side of the Jordan. **encamped against Jabesh-gilead**—Gilead was the mountainous region east of the Jordan, bounded on the north by Bashan and on the south by the country of the Ammonites. Jabesh was the principal city and was seven miles east of the Jordan. The Ammonites were about to lay siege to Jabesh and conquer it. **we will serve thee**—The inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead had little hope of conquering their enemies and desired to make the best terms possible with them. **2. thrust out all your right eyes**—This was a most cruel and barbarous condition, but it was not uncommon in the East. The destruction of the sight of the right eye would render the man unfit for war, for the shield was carried in the left hand and the left eye was covered and the right eye was used to watch the enemy in battle. The men of Jabesh would be fit for slaves, even if they had only the sight of the left eye.

3. give us seven days' respite—The conditions proposed by the Ammonites were too severe for the men of Jabesh to accept, and they pleaded for time to prepare for war. They desired to call upon the rest of Israel for help. The Ammonites were willing to grant the request for a seven days' respite, because they did not believe the other tribes of Israel would respond to a call for aid. **4. then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul**—They doubtless knew that Saul had been appointed king, and believed an appeal to him and his people would be the best way to secure relief. **tidings**—The news of the threat and demands of the Ammonites. **in the ears of the people**—Saul was not in the city at the time and the messengers spoke to the people. **wept**—Oriental peoples express their grief with weeping and loud lamentations. **5. Saul came after the herd out of the field**—Although he was king of Israel, he was, up to this time, employed with his affairs. The time was at hand for him to leave his herds and command men.

II. The response (vs. 6-9). **6. the Spirit of God came upon Saul**—The report from Jabesh-Gilead meant more to him than to the rest of Israel, for on him rested the responsibility of affording relief to his people. The Spirit of God came upon him, moving him to action and directing him in the course he should take. The Spirit of God had come upon the judges in the past to the same end. **his anger was kindled greatly**—His indignation was greatly aroused because of the barbarous demands made by the Ammonites upon his subjects across the Jordan. **7. took a yoke of oxen**—Perhaps that with which he had been plowing in the field. **hewed them in pieces**—The occasion demanded instant and vigorous action. Saul sent pieces of the slaughtered oxen to each of the tribes of Israel without delay, and threatened them with the destruction of their oxen if they should disregard his call. **after Saul and after Samuel**—Saul used the name of Samuel to strengthen the authority with which the men of war were summoned, for all Israel had high regard for Samuel as a prophet and as a leader. **fear of the Lord fell on the people**—As the Spirit of God came upon Saul, moving him to action, so the fear of the Lord fell upon the people, leading them to act in accord with Saul. **came out with one consent**—It was a movement of united Israel. Their national existence was at stake. **8. Bezek**—Its location is unknown. It was on the west side of Jordan, a day's march from Jabesh-Gilead. **children of Israel....men of Judah**—This division, that of Israel and Judah, seems to indicate that even at this early time there was rivalry between Judah and the other tribes of Israel, and a tendency to draw apart, which resulted in the division of the monarchy in Rehoboam's time. Three hundred thirty thousand men of war were gathered within the seven days. At the time Israel entered Canaan the number of men was more than six hundred thousand, hence an army of this size was easily possible. **9. to morrow....ye shall have help**—This announcement was made to the messengers that came from Jabesh. On the following day by noon the army of Israel would be at Jabesh-Gilead.

III. Victory over the Ammonites (vs. 10, 11). **10. to morrow we will come out**—The men of Jabesh did not tell their enemies whether they had received promise of help or not. **do with us all that seemeth good**—They announced to the Ammonites that they would fight rather than submit to have their right eyes thrust out. Their enemies doubtless believed they would easily defeat the men of Jabesh-Gilead. **11. in three companies**—That the attack might be made on the Ammonites at three points at the same time. **in the morning watch**—The Israelites divided the night into three watches.

IV. Saul's kingship recognized (vs. 12-15). **12. shall Saul reign over us**—Some had shown disloyalty to Saul at Mizpeh, when he was proclaimed king; and now that he had led Israel to a great victory, the people thought that the disloyal ones ought to be put to death. **13. not....put to death**—Saul generously passed over the insult that had been offered him and declared that the Lord had brought a great deliverance to Israel. **14. let us go to Gilgal**—Samuel understood the situation and saw that the opportune time had come for Saul to become thoroughly established in the kingdom. Gilgal was about half way between Jericho and the Jordan. Israel had encamped there after crossing the Jordan upon entering Canaan. **15. made Saul king before the Lord**—It was a religious event. It is quite probable that Saul was again anointed. The people gladly acknowledged Saul as their king.

QUESTIONS.—What threats were made against Jabesh-Gilead? What cruel condition was imposed? What course did the men of Jabesh take? How did Saul respond to the appeal? How large an army was gathered? Describe the attack and the victory. Describe the meeting at Gilgal. What qualities in Saul are brought out in the events studied to-day?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The position occupied by Saul in Israel. 2. The place of Samuel since Saul's anointing as king. 3. The chain of providences that brought Saul into notice and led to his full recognition as king. 4. The significance and importance of the change in Israel's government. 5. The outlook at the beginning of the events studied to-day. 6. God's hand in history.

II. Theme.—God's way of bringing things to pass.

III. A great leader needed.—1. The danger that threatened Jabesh-Gilead. 2. This same danger threatened all of Israel. 3. The Ammonites. (1) Their origin. (2) Their location. (3) A nation given to pillage. 4. The barbarous condition imposed upon the men of Jabesh-Gilead. 5. The Ammonites' confidence of victory. 6. The hope the men of Jabesh had of receiving assistance. 7. The seven days' respite granted and wisely used. 8. Why the messengers went to Gibeah of Saul. 9. The messengers told the tidings to the people instead of to Saul. 10. Saul's occupation.

IV. A united effort.—1. Saul's feelings upon hearing of the Ammonites' treatment of the people of Jabesh-Gilead. 2. His readiness to act. 3. The time was short to rescue Jabesh. 4. The prompt response of the tribes. 5. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul and also upon the people and resulted in concerted action for the relief of Jabesh and the honor and integrity of Israel. 6. A great army ready for battle.

V. A victory and its result.—1. The early attack. 2. The greatness of the victory. 3. The relief for Jabesh-Gilead. 4. Relief for all Israel. 5. Saul gladly recognized as king. 6. All Israel united. 7. An acknowledgment that victory came from the Lord.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Invasion of Israel.**

I. Due to internal disorganization.
II. Overcome under divine inspiration.

I. Due to internal disorganization. In the opening verses of this chapter we see the results of disobedience in Israel and the immediate consequence of a national rejection of God. Here began the retribution upon Israel which Samuel declared should come as a result of such a rejection. The invasion of the Ammonites was the first approach of a coming storm. Israel was to learn the difference between waging warfare with her enemies and in having them held in subjection through answer to prayer. The shadows of the dark future were seen by Samuel and he labored to help the new king and the people to see that their only hope of success lay in their recognition of God and obedience to his leadership. Some apprehension of this war with the Ammonites had induced the Israelites to desire a king, though Israel had never been in real peril during any season when they were truly obedient to God. It was a clear indication of the disorganization of the nation that a petty despot should venture to show his contempt for Israel in so offensive a way. In the transition period from the judges to the kingdom, regardless of all Samuel had done toward securing unity of action, the old division of powers in tribal isolation and the consequent weakness against enemies still continued. Ammon was Israel's ancestral foe. It was a part of the calling of Israel to extirpate idolatry and God commanded this concerning the Ammonites. Nahash thought he saw the weakness of the men of Jabesh-Gilead and naturally their inability to defend themselves against his army. The Ammonites held in memory the humiliation inflicted on them by Jephthah. They held a deep-seated hatred that time had rendered almost chronic. They wanted to avenge themselves and regain their cities, and now Israel's sin had prepared the way for them to attempt this. The terms which Nahash offered combined insult with injury. This was a war of revenge undertaken by the strong against the weak. By putting "a reproach upon all Israel," Nahash indicated his intention of undertaking war against all Israel. There was a providence in the respite granted by Nahash, that his false security might be his ruin. The people of Jabesh-Gilead were painfully conscious of their helplessness. They were about to degrade the noble achievements of their ancestors, forgetting all the sacred memories of the past, thoughtful only of their own present safety.

II. Overcome under divine inspiration. Holy zeal in the cause of God and his brethren characterized Saul's first kingly deed. He had kept silence before the contempt of his enemies and had retired to the quiet of his accustomed rural occupations. It was therefore vastly important that he should by some deed of deliverance show himself to be the king who could lead Israel to victory over her enemies. The tidings which caused wailing among the men of Gilead were the occasion of a remarkable display of courage and energy on the part of Saul, and that because "the Spirit of God came upon him." In their wars with the heathen Israel acted under a divine commission. It was as the man chosen of God, by the voice of his prophet, to be king, that Saul acted,—as one possessed of legitimate authority. Saul took faithful observation of the appeal for help. He exhibited sympathetic compassion for their distress. He showed magnanimous readiness to help. The message which he sent to the men of Jabesh-Gilead was a testimony of helpful, active, brotherly love, a promise of speedy help, a trustworthy assurance of success, a source of great joy. The powerful impression made by Saul's appearance and message laid hold of the whole nation and brought them into unity. It was fitting that Saul should publicly recognize the hand of God in his first victory and that he should refuse to mar the joy of victory by personal retaliation. He showed due regard to Samuel as prophet. The nation acknowledged his sovereignty. T. B. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Rallying to the standard (v. 7). When a Highland chieftain wished to summon his clan upon any sudden or important emergency, he slew a goat, and, making a cross of light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the Fiery Cross. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, delivered it to a designated person, with the announcement of the meeting-place. He who received it was bound to carry it without delay to the next hamlet. At sight of the Fiery Cross every man from sixteen to sixty, capable of bearing arms, must repair to the rendezvous at once, with the penalty of death if he failed to do so. So in the Lady of the Lake, Malise carries the symbol over hill and dale, through bog and winding glen to Duncraggan's huts. Angus, standing beside his father's bier, receives the symbol and dashes away. Norman, coming out of the chapel of St. Bride with his bride, has the symbol thrust into his hand, and, with a farewell song to his Mary, speeds away. When will the cross of Christ arouse the same degree of enthusiasm, call to the same sacrifice, and impel the same haste among a proportionate number of the followers of the Nazarene? The ancient refrain, "Who will come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty?" is too often lost among the echoes of a dead formalism. It is God's design to have active, zealous human workers to further his plans.

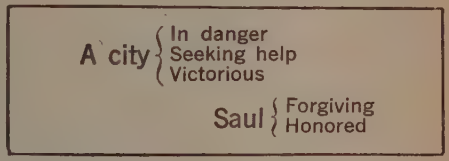
A magnanimous spirit (v. 13). Louis XII, of France, is noted in history for his generous spirit toward his enemies. On his accession to the throne he had a list of these drawn up and a black cross marked opposite each name. They thought this was a sign of punishment and all fled. Louis called them into his presence and assured them they had no cause for alarm as the reason he had the cross marked before their names was to remind him of the cross that brings pardon to all. On the morning of the battle of Trafalgar, Lord Nelson penned the following words: "May humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet."

The greatest conqueror (Golden Text). Alexander was called "The Great," but was conquered by his own lusts. Napoleon was called "The Man of Destiny," but in the closing hours of his life, deliberately falsified dates and facts in order to add to his fame. General Grant was a stubborn fighter and victorious leader, but was himself mastered by nicotin. Of Robert Burns, Carlyle asks, "Will a courser of the sun work softly in the harness of a trade horse? His hoofs are of fire, his path is in the heavens, his task bringing light to all lands." Yet his brilliant genius and his song-intoxicated soul succumbed to the reign of sin, the end of which is death. Such was the promise and evidence of genius in Lord Byron that, when the news came of his death at the age of thirty-six, Alfred Tennyson said, "I thought the world was at an end;" but for Byron that end was an hour when "the worm, the canker, and the grief were his alone." The true conquest is the conquest of spirit and is greater than the conquest of cities or nations. It is greater in results; it is greater in character. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—It is better to be forgiving than to seek revenge.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE



A beginning. Draw out from the class, by questioning, the story of how Saul came to be anointed king of Israel. What do the children think of his hiding among the stuff, when he was wanted by Samuel and the people to be proclaimed king? Saul went to his home from Mizpeh and continued his work as a farmer. The lesson to-day tells how he became honored as king.

A city in danger. Draw a square to represent a wall about a city, and write inside the name of it, which is Jabesh-Gilead. At a little distance from it draw several lines to represent the camp of the Ammonites, who had come to fight against the city and to take possession of it. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, was willing to spare the people of Jabesh-Gilead, if they would let him put out their right eyes and would become his servants. This cruel demand shows how wicked people can become.

Seeking help. Jabesh-Gilead was a part of Israel, and the people believed they might receive help from the other tribes. How anxious they must have been to escape the cruelty of the Ammonites! Tell the story of how the Lord helped Saul to raise a great army in Israel to help their brethren in Jabesh-Gilead. Saul had been at work in the field, but when he knew that a city was in danger, he hastened to give aid.

Israel victorious. Near the city and close by the camp of the Ammonites draw three sets of lines, representing three large bodies of soldiers. Israel's great army was divided into three companies, which made an attack all at once upon the Ammonites. They were victorious and scattered the army of the Ammonites until not two men were left together. Draw an eraser across the lines representing the camp of the Ammonites. God gave Israel the victory.

Saul was forgiving. Tell the story of the men of Gibeah who did not like Saul and would not own him as their king. After this victory the people were glad to own Saul as king and they wished to put to death those who had opposed him, but Saul was gentle and forgiving and would not have them hurt. Impress the lesson of forgiveness, and show the danger there is in being hasty and revengeful.

Saul was honored. Saul had done exactly what the people wanted a king to do. They thought they needed a king to fight their enemies. Saul had shown himself to be a brave, strong, humble and patient man, and the people were glad that the Lord had given him to them as their king. God had helped Saul to act wisely and mercifully, and he recognized God's hand in the success he had.

LESSON XII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Mar. 15.—Jonathan and his armor-bearer.—1 Sam. 14: 1-13. Tu.—Israel victorious.—1 Sam. 14: 14-23. Wed.—Jonathan's trespass.—1 Sam. 14: 24-35. Th.—Jonathan's rescue.—1 Sam. 14: 36-46. Fr.—Reward of courageous faith.—Isa. 7: 1-9. Sat.—The great Protector.—Psa. 121. Su.—The Christian armor.—Eph. 6: 10-20.

Jonathan and His Armor-bearer.—1 Samuel 14: 1-46. Print 14: 1-13.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verse, 7)

SUPT.—1 Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jon'a-than the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Phil'is-tines' garrison, that is on the other side. But he told not his father.

School.—2 And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gib'e-ah under a pomegranate tree which is in Mig'ron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men;

3 And A-hi'ah, the son of A-hi'tub, I'cha-bod's brother, the son of Phin'e-has, the son of E'li, the Lord's priest in Shi'loh, wearing an e'phod. And the people knew not that Jon'a-than was gone.

4 And between the passages, by which Jon'a-than sought to go over unto the Phil'is-tines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one was Bo'zez, and the name of the other Sen'eh.

5 The forefront of the one was situate northward over against Mich'mash, and the other southward over against Gib'e-ah.

6 And Jon'a-than said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.

7 And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart.

8 Then said Jon'a-than, Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them.

9 If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them.

10 But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us.

11 And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Phil'is-tines: and the Phil'is-tines said, Behold, the He'brews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.

12 And the men of the garrison answered Jon'a-than and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jon'a-than said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Is'ra-el.

13 And Jon'a-than climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jon'a-than; and his armourbearer slew after him.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 Now it fell upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on yonder side. But he told not his father. 2 And Saul abode in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate-tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men; 3 and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of Jehovah in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. 4 And between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a rocky crag on the one side, and a rocky crag on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. 5 The one crag rose up on the north in front of Michmash, and the other on the south in front of Geba.

6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that Jehovah will work for us; for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few. 7 And his armorbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thy heart: turn thee, behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. 8 Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto the men, and we will disclose ourselves unto them. 9 If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. 10 But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up; for Jehovah hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be the sign unto us. 11 And both of them disclosed themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves. 12 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will show you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armorbearer, Come up after me; for Jehovah hath delivered them into the hand of Israel. 13 And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armorbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armorbearer slew them after him.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Let us put on the armor of light. Rom. 13: 12.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**God gives victory to those who trust and obey him.**

TOPIC.—**Inspired leadership.**

OUTLINE.—**I. A bold attack. II. A great victory. III. Saul's unwise demand.**

TIME.—**B. C. 1087.**

PLACES.—**Gibeah; Michmash.**

INTRODUCTION.—We have in 1 Sam. 12 what has been called Samuel's farewell address. In it he calls upon the people to point to any act of dishonesty or injustice he had ever done. This was upon the occasion of the assembly at Gilgal, when Saul became established in the kingdom, and great numbers of the Israelites were present. They were unable to point to any wrong Samuel had done. They approved of his course. He took occasion to recall the wickedness of their fathers in serving other gods and the punishment that came upon them. He reminded them of their wrong course in demanding a king. He comforted them by giving them the sign of a thunderstorm in harvest, an unusual occurrence in that country. He told them that, if they would obey the Lord, they would prosper; but if they turned away from him, he would destroy both them and their king. Saul's hands were full in repelling the frequent attacks of the Philistines. On the whole thus far Saul had shown himself a suitable man to stand at the head of the Israelitish nation.

COMMENTARY.—I. A BOLD ATTACK (vs. 1-12). **1. the young man that bare his armour**—He was Jonathan's trusted attendant, who proved himself both brave and strong on this occasion. **let us go over to the Philistines' garrison**—The Philistines had come to the very center of Israel's country with a great army and were encamped on the opposite side of the valley from where Saul's small force was staying. Jonathan's suggestion to his attendant was a bold one. **told not his father**—It was not in keeping with military tactics for such a movement as this to be undertaken. Saul would not be likely to approve of the project. **2. uttermost part of Gibeah**—Saul, with his six hundred men and Samuel and Ahiah, the priest, was entrenched on one of the many hills of the extreme northern part of Gibeah. **Migron**—The name means precipice. **six hundred men**—His army that he had had was reduced to this small company. **3. Ahiah**—A great grandson of Eli. He was the high priest. **wearing an ephod**—The ephod "consisted of two parts, of which one covered the back, and the other the front, that is, the breast and upper part of the body. These were clasped together on the shoulder with two large onyx stones, each having engraved on it six of the names of the tribes of Israel. It was further united by a 'curious girdle' of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen round the waist." It was worn by the high priest of Israel.

4. between the passages—From the description of the place it is evident there was a valley leading down to the main valley from where Saul was encamped, and one leading up on the other side to where the Philistines were. Between these, in the valley, were the steep rocks or hills mentioned, called Bozez, shining, and Seneh, thorn. **5. over against Michmash**—One crag was to the north in front of Michmash and the other south of it in front of Gibeah. Michmash and Gibeah were on opposite sides of a valley that extended nearly east and west about seven miles north of Jerusalem. The facts stated in verses 2-5 are thrown in as parenthetical to give details as to the conditions under which the assault about to be described was made.

6. these uncircumcised—Circumcision was a rite by which the Israelites were set apart as God's peculiar people. The Philistines were designated as uncircumcised, since they were not the Lord's people. By this term the Israelites expressed their abhorrence of the Philistines. **it may be that the Lord will work for us**—This expression did not imply a doubt; it signified simply that the object he aimed at was not in his own power, but it depended upon God, and that he expected success neither from his own strength nor his own merit.—*J., F. & B.* **to save by many or by few**—The expression just before this indicates that Jonathan believed in God's ability to give success and that his power might be exercised on this occasion. He expressed his faith clearly. He had a conviction that God would give the victory that moved him to go forward trusting in him. **7. I am with thee**—Jonathan's armor-bearer had confidence in his master and also in God. He did not hesitate to go with him, nor did he attempt to turn him from his purpose.

8. we will discover ourselves unto them—They would go to the garrison of the Philistines and would make themselves known to them. **9. if they say thus unto us**—Jonathan had no doubt prayed beforehand for guidance, and now he proposed a test by which it would be clearly indicated what course he should pursue in the matter. **10. the Lord hath delivered them into our hand**—This statement shows how implicitly Jonathan depended upon the Lord's direction and aid. **a sign unto us**—Our action will depend upon the words received from the Philistines. They will be the unconscious bearers of a message from God. **11. the Hebrews come forth**—The Philistines understood the weakness of Israel at that time, and believed they were hiding in the numerous caverns of the locality. They could not have known for what purpose Jonathan and his armor-bearer had come forth. **12. answered**—The two had not addressed the Philistines, but their presence called for words from them. **come up to us**—With this invitation came the knowledge of what Jonathan and his armor-bearer should do and what the Lord would do for them. **we will shew you a thing**—These words may have been spoken in contempt or derision. Dr. Clarke thinks the Philistines desired to show the men the strength of their defenses.

II. A GREAT VICTORY (vs. 13-23). **13. climbed up**—Immediately to the east of the village of Michmash exists a natural fortress, still called the fort by the peasantry. It is a ridge rising in three rounded knolls above a perpendicular crag, ending in a narrow tongue to the east with cliffs below.—*Conder.* An advance guard of the Philistines may have held this position, and this crag may have been the one Jonathan and his armor-bearer ascended. **they fell before Jonathan**—Twenty men fell before Jonathan and his armor-bearer in a space equal to one side of a square containing an acre. **14, 15.** Great fear fell upon the Philistines because of this successful attack and the terror was increased by the quaking of the earth. **16-23.** Saul was within sight of the camp of the Philistines and saw what was being done there. He caused his camp to be searched to determine who of his men were missing. His little army joined in the battle, and those who were hiding in Ephraim came out also to help their brethren. There were Hebrews in the camp of the Philistines, who probably were slaves. These turned against their masters and the victory was great.

III. SAUL'S UNWISE DEMAND (vs. 24-46). Saul was much moved by the victory which was being gained over the Philistines, and rashly decreed that no man should taste food that day. He did not consider that his men would be better fitted to pursue the enemy if they should be strengthened by taking food. There was woodland then in that country and many wild bees. Honey was produced in large quantities. Jonathan was ignorant of his father's decree and ate some honey. It was learned later what Jonathan had done and Saul was determined to have him slain in accordance with his decree, but the people interfered and saved Jonathan from death.

QUESTIONS.—What was the condition of the Israelites in their relation to the Philistines at this time? Where were the two armies? What did Jonathan propose to his armor-bearer that they should do? What test did Jonathan make to learn what he should do? Describe the victory gained by Israel over the Philistines. What mistake did Saul make? How was his unwise purpose changed?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. Samuel's address as given in chapter 12. (1) His personal integrity. (2) Israel's past sins and punishment. (3) Their sin in asking a king. (4) The condition on which they would prosper. 2. Saul's error in acting as a priest to offer sacrifice. 3. The great responsibility resting upon Saul. 4. Samuel was still a force in Israel. 5. God's interest in Israel. 6. The consequences of trusting God.

II. Theme.—Attempting great things.

III. A great need.—1. A great Philistine host at Michmash threatened Israel. 2. Israel greatly reduced. (1) An army of only about six hundred to withstand the Philistines. (2) But few weapons in Israel. (3) The lack of tools for making weapons. (4) Saul seemed unable to meet the necessity in the case.

IV. Great courage.—1. The relative positions of the opposing armies. 2. The proposition made by Jonathan to his armor-bearer. 3. The test by which Jonathan would learn what to do. 4. The risk incurred by Jonathan and his armor-bearer in placing themselves within the power of the Philistines. 5. Compare the courage of Jonathan and his armor-bearer with that of Gideon and his three hundred. 6. Courage inspired by divine conviction.

V. A great victory.—1. Entrance into the Philistines' garrison. 2. The support given Jonathan by his armor-bearer. 3. The beginnings of the victory. 4. The terror inspired in the Philistines. 5. The quaking of the earth. 6. Those who joined Jonathan and his armor-bearer in pursuing the Philistines. (1) Saul's men. (2) Hebrews in the Philistine camp. (3) Israelites in Ephraim. 7. Incidents of the victory. (1) Saul's unwise decree. (2) The people's sin in eating flesh with blood. 8. The victory came through Jonathan's faith and courage.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Inspired leadership.**

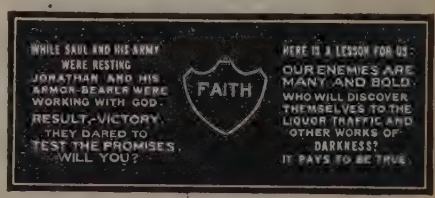
I. Revealed God's power to Israel.
II. Revealed Saul's true character.

I. Revealed God's power to Israel. This lesson shows what great results may attend individual effort. In Israel's extremity, under a most noble inspiration, help came through the courageous enterprise of Jonathan, who with his body-guard opened a campaign which overcame the enemies of Israel. The approach to the Philistine garrison would have been pronounced impassable by a less decisive and less courageous mind. Jonathan believed that it was the height of wisdom to give God the opportunity to reveal his mighty arm. His thought was of the promises and purposes of God concerning Israel. It was not his own project that was to be carried out, but the advancement of God's cause. There was a profoundly religious spirit controlling the impulse which led Jonathan to act. He believed that God's help was not dependent on the extent or the degree of the means by which it is realized, and that his power is absolute. The inspiration of faith vindicated itself and the noble self-devotion that had plunged into this otherwise desperate enterprise, led to a triumph more speedy and complete than even Jonathan may have contemplated. He was the hero of the scene. Saul had no thought of making an attack on the Philistines at that time. His recent transgression was now bearing some bitter fruit in his comparative inactivity and helplessness. When the Israelites, who had hidden in caves, saw that the army of the Philistines had met disaster, they helped on the victory. The faith of Jonathan had a glorious reward.

II. Revealed Saul's true character. It was a tacit understanding with Saul on the settlement of the kingdom that he might rely on the guidance of God. Samuel's exhortations and instructions emphasized the same, but Saul began to disregard God's will in his public acts and was now beginning to reap the penalty. Fear of the threatening dangers had seized on his heart; then impatience prevented him from waiting the time appointed by Samuel for sacrifice; then doubt of the trustworthiness of the divine promise came in. All this drove Saul to the purpose of helping himself, which dissipated more and more his trust in God. It was the root of unbelief from which all this sprang. Here began the unsteadiness and passionate character of Saul's inner life. He was indeed fulfilling Samuel's predictions. In accordance with his pretext that he must seek the Lord's face before going to battle, Saul sought to set forth proofs of his piety, and godliness, such as calling for the ark of God, showing a great zeal against those who transgressed the law, in the building of an altar to the Lord, in asking God concerning further military undertakings and in swearing by the Lord to punish the concealed sin of the people in asking him to decide where the sin was. Saul censured and checked the people, but not himself. It was his selfish motive that determined such conduct. He appeared more deeply affected by the neglect of some outward and formal duty than by the indulgence within himself of a wrong and impious mind. In the exercise of that self-will he imposed on the people an obligation, with a penalty attached, a most presumptuous thing when no direct command of God would be infringed if the people failed to conform to his word. If anything could have brought Saul to a sense of his error, it would have been the discovery that his rash decree and oath had implicated his own son, and made him consider Jonathan's case on its merits regardless of his own reputation. The honor put upon Jonathan in his charge against the Philistines was evidence to all but the obstinate king that God worked with him. A temporary revolution saved Jonathan. The people, wiser than their king, rescued the well-beloved Jonathan. What Saul deemed a capital offense, reason and justice declared an unconscious transgression of an unjust decree. The remonstrance of the people was just, devout, resolute, successful.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Attempt great things for God (v. 1). It is the man of convictions who does things. Because he was a man of convictions, Luther faced the Catholicism of Europe. Because he was a man of convictions, William Carey faced the ridicule of England and the granite-walled heathenism of India. Because he was a man of convictions, David Livingstone opened up the heart of Africa to civilization and Christianity. Because he was a man of convictions, George Muller built orphanages for hundreds of homeless children. Because he was a man of convictions, Jonathan faced the whole Philistine army. "One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the Lord your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you" (Josh. 23:10).

Expect great things from God (v. 6). God and a minority make a winning ticket. Caleb and Joshua granted as true all that was said about giants and walled cities, but said, "Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30). "God can work wonders if he can get a suitable man. Men can work wonders if they can get God to lead them. The full endowment of the Spirit would be eminently useful in these latter days. Men who can stir things mightily for God, whose spiritual revolutions change the whole aspect of things, are the universal need of the church."

Bozez and Seneh (v. 4). Bozez means smooth and shining. Seneh means thorn. Between the smooth and shining, yet sharp, rock of compromise, love of ease, the alternative of staying in the tents with Saul and his cowering six hundred, and the sharp, pointed rock of opposition, ridicule, self-denial, sacrifice and suffering, stretched the narrow path of duty which led to the victory-crowned heights above. It is the old, old story. While the hundreds stay in the camps of ease, or of pleasure, or of fear, the victories are won by the few who are willing to attempt the impossible. On the one side of our Jonathan-Leader was the smooth rock of compromise on which was written, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matt. 27:40). On the other side was the thorn rock of sacrifice, suffering and death. But between them he pressed through to victory, "leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

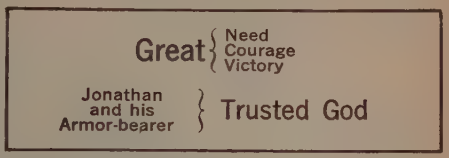
The test of loyalty (v. 7). God works through leaders. But these leaders must have their supporters. Moses had Aaron and Miriam; Joshua had his Caleb; while Paul had his Silas, Barnabas and Timothy. Christ is our leader, the Captain of our salvation. But Omnipotence can be fettered and bound by finite incompetency and indifference. It was for this that Meroz was cursed (Judges 5:23). What Christ needs to conquer the world is an army of armor-bearers who will individually say, "Behold, I am with thee according to thy heart." When Daniel Webster was about to give his Bunker Hill oration, the jam was so great that he said, "My friends, keep back; otherwise the consequences may be fatal." "It is impossible, Mr. Webster," was the reply. "Impossible? Nothing is impossible on Bunker Hill!" was his answer and the crowd fell back. On the highlands of God's promises, nothing is impossible. Faith is triumphant.

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The Christian needs great faith and courage.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE



Review. Spend a little time upon the way Saul became king of Israel. Review the great victory he gained over the Ammonites. Show how the Lord worked in Israel's behalf. Note the fact that enemies are opposed to us.

A great need. War is a dreadful thing. God does not desire that men and nations should be at war with one another. It is because of sin that war exists anywhere. Israel had many enemies. At this time a great host of Philistines threatened to defeat Saul and his little company. Draw on the board a large circle to represent the Philistine camp and a little below it a small circle to show the camp of Israel. The Israelites not only had a small army but they had just a few weapons, and were not able to make more.

Great courage. We are now introduced to two new men of Israel. The name of one was Jonathan and the name of the other we do not know. Picture to the class Jonathan and his armor-bearer leaving the camp of Israel all alone, and going away without the knowledge of any of their own people. See them going from the small circle toward the large one. Is it possible that those two men are really going into the great camp of the Philistines? They have shields and swords just as if they intended to fight. Recall the story of Gideon and his three hundred men who put to flight the immense army of the Midianites. It must have taken courage for Gideon to do it, and it took courage for Jonathan to start out as he did with just one man to help him. See him as he comes nearer the large camp.

A great victory. How does Jonathan dare to go so near? Yes, he believes God has sent him out to help deliver his nation from the Philistines. But is he quite sure? If he is not, he will be; for he is making a test. If the Philistines call to him and tell him to stand still, he will believe he should go no further; but if they say, "Come up unto us," he will know that the Lord will give them the victory. The Philistines call them to come to them, and now victory is near. See Jonathan and his armor-bearer close to him climbing on their hands and feet up the steep side of the hill on which the Philistines are. They are up at last, and begin the work of destroying this stronghold. They terrify the Philistines and the Lord sends an earthquake to make them more afraid.

They trusted God. It was because two men went out trusting the Lord for victory, that they set their people free from oppression. Show that faith in God will give every one victory over all sin. The Lord will help us to be free from every evil habit.

LESSON XIII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Mar. 22.—God's mercies to disobedient Israel.—Neh. 9: 26-31. Tu.—God's patience with Israel.—Judges 2: 7-19. Wed.—The call of Gideon.—Judges 6: 11-40. Th.—Ruth chooses the true God.—Ruth 1. Fr.—Samuel called to be a prophet.—1 Sam. 3: 1-13, 19, 20. Sat.—Samuel, the victorious leader.—1 Sam. 7: 3-17. Su.—Saul gains his kingdom.—1 Sam. 11.

God's Mercies to Disobedient Israel—Review.—Nehemiah 9: 26-31.

[A reading lesson only.]

SUPT.—26 Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.

School.—27 Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.

28 But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee: therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies;

29 And testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (which if a man do, he shall live in them;) and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear.

30 Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.

31 Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.

SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people. Prov. 14: 34.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**True success comes only to those who love and serve God.**

TOPIC.—**Sin in Israel.**

INTRODUCTION.—The lessons of this quarter cover a period of something like four hundred years. The entire time of the judges is included and the transition from the administration by judges to the establishment of the kingdom with Saul as sovereign. In the history which we have studied there are many moral and spiritual lessons, and these furnish excellent material for instruction.

SUMMARY.—Lesson I. Topic: God's methods. Place: The land of Canaan. The people observed God's law during Joshua's lifetime and while those were alive who had been associated with him. Afterward they turned to idols. As a punishment for their disobedience the Lord permitted their enemies to gain the advantage over them and oppress them. The Lord heard them when they cried to him and raised up judges to deliver them.

II. Topic: Israel called to freedom. Place: Northern Canaan. Israel fell into sin repeatedly and were oppressed by the people of Mesopotamia, the Moabites and the Canaanites. Sisera and his hosts came against the Israelites in northern Canaan, and the Lord inspired Deborah to undertake the deliverance of her people. She called Barak, the captain of the army of Israel, to take the field. She went with him and defeated the enemy. Sisera was slain.

III. Topic: Deliverance for Israel. Place: Plain of Jezreel. Israel had peace for many years after the victory of Deborah and Barak, but later the people sinned again and the hosts of Midian overran the land, robbing the inhabitants and inciting terror throughout the nation. The people cried to the Lord and he called Gideon to become their judge and deliverer. The Lord gave him unmistakable signs that he had called him.

IV. Topic: Divinely ordained tests. Place: Plain of Jezreel. Gideon was called Baal-fighter, because he tore down the altar of Baal. He called the tribes of Israel to battle and thirty-two thousand responded. He was divinely directed to apply two tests, which resulted in reducing his army to three hundred men. These, armed with trumpets, pitchers and lamps, put the great Midianite army to flight by blowing their trumpets, breaking their pitchers and shouting.

V. Topic: Parenthood. Place: Zorah, Samson's birthplace. The Philistines, who dwelt on the plain along the Mediterranean Sea, troubled Israel greatly after the Israelites again fell into idolatry. The Philistines made trouble especially in the southwestern part of Israel. The Lord promised Manoah and his wife that they should have a son and told them that he should be a Nazarite all his life. The wife of Manoah should refrain from wine or strong drink before the child was born. Samson became a judge in Israel.

VI. Topic: True consecration. Places: Moab; Bethlehem. Elimelech and Naomi and their two sons moved from Bethlehem to Moab on account of famine. The sons married Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah. During the ten years of residence there, Elimelech and the two sons died. Naomi returned to Canaan and tried to have Ruth and Orpah remain in Moab, but Ruth persisted in going with her. She chose God and his people for hers.

VII. Topic: Preparation for success. Place: Shiloh. The Lord promised Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, a son. She said that she would devote him from his early infancy to the Lord. At the age of three or four years she took him to the house of the Lord, there to remain and serve under Eli, the priest and judge. When he was about twelve years old the Lord called him one night and gave him a message for Eli.

VIII. Topic: Disaster in Israel. Places: Ebenezer; Aphek; Shiloh. There was war between the Israelites and the Philistines. Israel was defeated and it was decided to bring the

ark of the covenant into the camp. This was done and the Philistines defeated Israel again and captured the ark. The sons of Eli were slain in the battle. Eli died when he heard the ark was taken. Though Eli failed in the proper government of his sons, he had a great interest in the welfare of the nation.

IX. Topic: Israel's return to God. Places: Ramah; Mizpeh; Ebenezer. The Philistines had oppressed Israel many years. Samuel had tried to bring about a reformation and the people were turning toward the Lord. They confessed their sins, gave up their idols and vowed to serve God only. The people gathered at Mizpeh and were sacrificing to God when the Philistines came upon them. The Lord sent a great storm which threw the Philistines into confusion. There was a great victory for Israel. Samuel marked the victory by setting up a stone, calling it Ebenezer, which means, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

X. Topic: National revolution. Place: Ramah. The people of Israel desired a king so as to be like other nations. They were displeased with Samuel's sons, whom he had employed to help him in judging Israel. The Lord granted them their desire, yet he preferred that they should continue under the judges that he would appoint. The Lord directed Samuel to anoint Saul to be king of Israel. The Lord told Samuel that the people were turning against himself and not against Samuel in demanding a king. The Lord had a man in readiness upon whom he could place the responsibility of kingship.

XI. Topic: Invasion of Israel. Places: Jabesh-Gilead; Gibeah; Bezek; Gilgal. Not all Israel received Saul as king at first. The Ammonites threatened Jabesh-Gilead and all Israel. When Saul heard it he raised an army of three hundred thirty thousand men and defeated the Ammonites. Thereupon all Israel was glad to recognize Saul as king. The kingdom was renewed at Gilgal.

XII. Topic: Inspired leadership. Places: Gibeah; Michmash. The Philistines were still troublesome and were encamped at Michmash. Saul had six hundred men at Gibeah. Jonathan, Saul's son, proposed to his armor-bearer that they two go to the stronghold of the Philistines. They scaled the height and slew the guard. The Philistines were put to confusion.

TABULAR VIEW

NO.	SUBJECTS	GOLDEN TEXTS	PRACTICAL TRUTHS	OUTLINES
I.	God's Patience with Israel. Judges 2: 7-19.	I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely. Hosea 14: 4.	The Lord hears the cry of the penitent.	I. The death of Joshua. II. Israel forsaking God. III. Deliverers raised up.
II.	Deborah and Barak Deliver Israel. Judges 4: 4-23; 5: 1-22.	The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. Psa. 34:17.	The Lord is strong in behalf of his people.	I. Deliverance promised. II. Victory for Israel. III. The song of triumph.
III.	The Call of Gideon. Judges 6: 11-40.	Blessed is the man whom thou choosest. Psa. 65: 4.	God calls to special work those who are faithful and capable.	I. Gideon's call. II. A sign given. III. Baal's altar destroyed. IV. Gideon assured.
IV.	Gideon and the Three Hundred. Judges 7: 1-25.	Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Zech. 4: 6.	It is through the power of God that his people triumph.	I. Gideon's army. II. Gideon encouraged. III. The attack. IV. The victory.
V.	The Birth of Samson—Temperance Lesson. Judges 13: 8-16, 24, 25.	Beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink. Judges 13: 4.	Strong drink is injurious to soul and body.	I. A heavenly visitor. II. Instructions given. III. A sacrifice offered. IV. Samson, the deliverer.
VI.	Ruth Chooses the True God. Ruth 1:1-22.	Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Ruth 1: 16.	It is the highest wisdom to choose God and his people.	I. Removal to Moab. II. The return. III. Two choices. IV. Arrival at Bethlehem.
VII.	Samuel Called to Be a Prophet. 1 Sam. 1: 24-28; 3: 1-21.	Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. 1 Sam. 3: 9.	The Lord calls us all into his service.	I. Samuel presented to the Lord. II. The Lord calling Samuel. III. The message to Eli. IV. Samuel a prophet.
VIII.	The Death of Eli and His Sons. 1 Sam. 4: 1-18.	Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. James 1: 22.	Sin brings disaster.	I. The ark carried into battle. II. The Philistines terrified. III. Israel defeated. IV. The death of Eli.
IX.	Samuel, the Victorious Leader. 1 Sam. 7: 3-17.	Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. 1 Sam. 7: 12.	The Lord sends help to those who humble themselves.	I. Preparation. II. Victory. III. A noble life.
X.	Saul Anointed King. 1 Sam. 8: 1–10: 27.	Fear God. Honour the king. 1 Peter 2: 17.	God calls choice men for extraordinary work.	I. Asking for a king. II. Saul and Samuel meet. III. Saul anointed king. IV. Saul proclaimed king.
XI.	Saul Gains His Kingdom. 1 Sam. 11: 1-15.	He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. Prov. 16: 32.	Courage and large-heartedness go well together.	I. Jabesh-Gilead's appeal. II. The response. III. Victory over the Ammonites. IV. Saul's kingship recognized.
XII.	Jonathan and His Armor-bearer. 1 Sam. 14: 1-46.	Let us put on the armour of light. Rom. 13: 12.	God gives victory to those who trust and obey him.	I. A bold attack. II. A great victory. III. Saul's unwise demand.

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. A brief outline of history from the creation to the events of the present quarter. 2. The time covered by the events studied during this quarter. 3. The land of Canaan had been divided among the tribes. 4. The quarter closes with Saul in the midst of his reign.

II. Theme.—The period of the judges.

III. A general view of the period.—1. The length of time. 2. The government was a theocracy. 3. The tribes did not form a compact nation. 4. The enemies of Israel. 5. The tendency of the Israelites toward idolatry. 6. The religious center during a long period was Shiloh. 7. Every man did what he considered right in his own eyes. 8. The change from the wandering life in the wilderness to that of having a settled abode.

IV. Prominent judges.—1. Conditions following the death of Joshua. 2. Joshua's influence. 3. The judgeship of Othniel. 4. The work accomplished by Deborah and Barak. 5. Gideon. (1) His occupation. (2) His call to the judgeship. (3) His assurance. (4) His victory over the Midianites. 6. Samson's birth and consecration to his work. 7. The story of Ruth. 8. The judgeship of Eli. (1) His excellences. (2) His great weakness. 9. The call of Samuel. 10. The great victory at Ebenezer.

V. The transition to the kingdom.—1. Samuel's great work in the nation as judge. 2. The demand of Israel for a king. (1) Samuel's sons were not good men. (2) The desire of Israel to be like other nations. (3) The call for a strong leader. 3. God's will as to the government of Israel. 4. God's consent to the appointment of a king. 5. The warning as to the character of a king. 6. Saul anointed by Samuel at the Lord's command. 7. The early part of Saul's reign. 8. The errors made by Saul. 9. Saul's life is a warning to us. 10. Jonathan's faith and courage.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Sin in Israel.**

I. Caused internal disorganization.
II. Set at naught divine sovereignty.

I. Caused internal disorganization. Nothing is more certain than the fact that God takes into account the record of his people, whether good or bad. His watchful care is unceasing. At the beginning of the quarter we have the period of Israel's faithfulness definitely marked off. Under Joshua God's plan for the conquest of Canaan and the peaceful settlement of his people was carefully carried out. The inhabitants of Canaan learned the object of the settlement of the Hebrew nation in that land. They were made to know that Jehovah was a God of power, who fought for his people and against him there could be no successful warfare. They learned also the weakness of Israel when they lapsed from strict observance of all that God commanded. It is in that weakened state spiritually and morally that we begin to follow their career. Israel was not at first charged with complete rejection of the religion of their fathers and the worship of Jehovah, but of mingling with idolaters in their worship which amounted to the breaking of the first commandment. The various tribes of Israel were stationed in their allotted places in Canaan for the purpose of subduing it and driving out their enemies. As they ventured into forbidden relations with the inhabitants, they involved themselves accordingly and lost the favor of God correspondingly. This led to tribal differences where there was no solidarity in their religious life. When they reached their extremity, they called upon God for relief, but with no deep sense of sin. The exceeding mercy and patience of God came to view in repeated seasons of uplift which he sent through the instrumentality of judges by whom he drew Israel into a revived state. In the days of Deborah Israel was woefully disorganized and indifferent to the commission God had given them. Under her ministry a revival began and the enemies of God's children were subdued. At the time when God called Gideon, the people were so far subjected to the heathen that they lived in constant dread of their oppression. The same sin of idolatry prevailed with no manifest trust in God and no unity of the tribes. The power of God was again exercised to deliver Israel and some measure of reformation was begun. So vital is the connection of family life with national life, that God sent his angel to Manoah's wife directing her in the preparation of Israel's future judge, through whom Israel was to be taught what an irresistible nation they would be if faithful to their covenant with God and how powerless they would be without him. Among the various ills that befell the disobedient Israelites was famine. In seeking to escape the chastisement of God Elimelech was not permitted to enjoy the plenty of a heathen land. Noami's loyalty to God led her back to Canaan with a trophy from heathendom, a true convert to God. When not only the people but the priesthood were corrupt, the yearning heart of Hannah asked for a son whom she might devote to the service of God, and Samuel was given.

II. Set at naught divine sovereignty. So blinded were the people to the real cause of their distress and so set were they to pattern after other nations, that they rebelled against the prayer life of Samuel and the method of defeating their enemies by prayer. Samuel stood as the mouthpiece of God to Israel and warned the people that they were rejecting God and his claim upon them, crushing their spiritual life and depending upon human power rather than upon God. Though Israel was given a king and God through his prophet instructed him the days of seeming success were brief. Only one recorded instance is given where Saul moved under divine leadership. His departure from God resulted in open injustice to his son and the army of Israel.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Dangerous symptoms. A reputable physician always diagnoses the condition of his patient as quickly as possible. The seriousness of the symptoms determines the severity of the remedies prescribed. The sins of the Jews were bad enough, but the gravity of their offenses are largely lost to us because of the difference in time. What we need to have brought home to us is the turpitude of our own sins. "Is there not a cause?" Look at the religious conditions of the present time. A member in good standing in one of the largest Protestant churches makes the following charge: "A coterie of men, mostly in our educational institutions....have formulated and are promulgating a propaganda that denies the integrity and infallible authority of the Bible, and thereby nullifies the doctrines of the church. Our church periodicals are, with two or three exceptions, edited by men in sympathy with this propaganda." The statements of prominent preachers and ecclesiastical leaders, in which they deny the authority of the Bible, or the deity of Christ, are becoming so common as scarcely to excite comment. One writer says, "The edge of our religious belief has been dulled, the objective truths of religion are comparatively ignored, the sterner features of Christianity are veiled and passed over. If we examine the religious tone of our popular authors, or if we observe the general feeling of society, we shall find that an eclectic system, consisting of the more attractive doctrines of Christianity combined with the latitudinarian philosophies, is everywhere the predominant belief." Note the moral conditions of the present time. Every paper contains the recital of some new crime against life or purity. Human life never seemed to be held as cheap as at the present time. The cities reek with corruption. A secular paper recently remarked, "Morality has become a pretense, and religion a mere form, with the great mass of our population: our practises of government and social life are such as we can not defend, or such as we are ashamed to acknowledge. Our cities, neighborhoods, even our houses are full of injustice, of sorrows, of controversies, leading to ruin. It is an age fair without, and of gorgeous decoration, but inwardly worse than a sepulcher." At first reading this may seem severe, but no careful student of the times will admit it is overdrawn. Again, note the intricate, entangled and threatening aspect of political affairs. The republic of China is still uncertain; the position of the German Emperor is unsettled through the spread of socialism; Mexico is in turmoil; most of the Central and South American states are in an unsettled condition; Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy, Turkey, and the Balkan States are passing through upheavals or having impending crises in governmental affairs. What does it mean? "The reins of empire, over the whole earth, were never held in such loose hands." Is it not time for the nations to stand "in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way and walk therein," and so find rest for their souls? Nations, as well as men, must abandon sin or God will abandon them. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hosea 10:12).

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—God is merciful to men and nations.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Stories about { Deborah, Gideon
Samson, Ruth
Eli, Samuel
Saul, Jonathan }

The review. The quarterly review may be profitably studied in the form of stories of the great leaders of Israel.

Deborah. The children may remember this noted woman of Israel. She was a prophetess. When Sisera and his great army came against Israel, she went with the general of Israel's army into battle and gained a great victory. This general was Barak. Tell about the song that Deborah wrote in honor of the victory.

Gideon. Tell the story of the trouble the Midianites were making Israel in carrying off their grain and other produce, and how Gideon was beating out a little wheat in a winepress, hiding from the Midianites. Tell of his call to be Israel's deliverer. Let the class tell about the larger army Gideon had at first and how it became only three hundred.

Samson. In giving the story of Samson, dwell upon the idea that he was to keep from drinking wine or any other kind of strong drink. He became an exceedingly strong man. Illustrate the fact of his strength by telling how his enemies tried to bind him and could not.

Ruth. The story of Ruth made such an impression upon the children's minds that they will be able to tell much about her. Write after her name on the board some of the things she did, and what came to her as a result of her determination to go with God's people. She chose the Lord.

Eli. The story of Eli's life is closely connected with that of Samuel, and it will be well to refer to the message that the Lord gave Eli by Samuel. Tell the story of Israel's defeat and the capture of the ark by the Philistines. When Eli heard that the ark was taken, he died. Eli loved Israel, yet he did not train his sons well.

Samuel. Every child that has heard the story of the boy Samuel is interested in him. Let the class tell about the call of Samuel in the night. God called him four times and Samuel answered every time. He was obedient and careful to do what was his duty. He grew to be a good and useful man. Tell of the great victory over the Philistines at Ebenezer.

Saul. When the Israelites eagerly asked Samuel that they might have a king, Samuel prayed to God about it, and God told him that they might have one. He told Samuel that he should anoint a man to be king. Tell the story of how Saul came to Ramah, where Samuel was, and was anointed king. Tell of Saul's victory over the Ammonites.

Jonathan. The bravery of Jonathan and his armor-bearer is a theme for a story. The Philistines were about to punish Israel, and these two men made a bold attack upon their camp and the enemy was defeated.



NAOMI AND HER DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW

DAVID

One of the most conspicuous characters in the scriptures is David, whose name means beloved. We are introduced to him as a shepherd boy in Bethlehem, when Samuel came to him under divine direction to anoint him king of Israel in the place of Saul, whom the Lord had rejected. His family was of the tribe of Judah, the royal tribe of all Israel, and we trace his line backward but a few generations to come to Ruth, illustrious because of her unalterable determination to go with the people of God. His ancestry gave him a decided advantage. He was being trained in his childhood to act promptly and courageously when action was demanded. His acts in protecting his father's sheep from wild animals constituted a part of his training and preparation for large responsibility.

We can scarcely wonder at the attitude the youthful David took toward the champion of the Philistine army when he went to the scene of the conflict to carry supplies to his brothers. His devotion to God was so warm, and his love for his nation so strong, that he could not bear the thought of the army of the living God being defied by the Gentile Goliath. His courage showed itself to great advantage in his offer to be the champion of Israel against the champion of the Philistines. He seemed to note no incongruity between his size and that of the giant. The fact that Goliath was mature and well equipped with weapons of defense and offense, did not appeal to him, who had only a shepherd's sling and a few smooth pebbles. He could boldly and calmly declare that he came in the name of the God of Israel whom the giant had defied. The occasion demanded a spirit and a courage like his, and we can not wonder at the outcome of the encounter between the two champions.

David's life was in no sense a quiet and easy one. His way appeared to be opening favorably when he was called to enter the court of Saul and perform extraordinary service for the king, but even there he encountered unexpected difficulties. He found it necessary to flee from the enraged and jealous king. This period under the reign of Saul was an important one in his life. He was a fugitive, now in the confines of Israel, and now in an enemy's country, but at every point he showed himself to be the master of the situation. While in the land of Israel, he drew to himself those who were in affliction and showed himself a friend to the oppressed. In the Philistines' country he learned their military strength, their arts of war and their weapons. His life under Saul won for him the respect and love of a large part of Israel and he learned the lessons of patience and self-control. Although he had been anointed for kingship, the prospects of his becoming king were far from cheering, yet he did not lose heart.

When at length he entered upon the kingship of his people at the death of Saul, his way was not altogether a flowery one. Only two of the tribes of Israel were willing to accept him as their king. The others preferred to follow a son of Saul. Then the nation was not victorious over its enemies. The Philistines were powerful. They had come with an army from Philistia, had crossed the land of Israel to the eastern side and reached Mount Gilboa, where Saul and his sons were slain in battle. Other enemies still threatened the nation, hence David did not receive his kingdom with peace assured, but he was to engage in warfare to subdue his enemies and retain the territory God had given to his people. Victory, however, attended his campaigns, and in seven years he had secured the allegiance of all Israel. The proclamation of David as king over united Israel was the result of his humble, wise, patient, straightforward course in his administration of the smaller kingdom.

King David's grievous sin in the matter of Bath-sheba and Uriah came in the height of his prosperity. Although he deeply repented, he suffered the consequences of his evil course during the remainder of his life. David's greatness was manifold. He was great as a warrior. He was a great statesman. He excelled as a literary man. The psalms which he wrote breathe a great depth of spirituality. The world is greatly indebted to David for what he wrote expressive of the feelings of the soul and setting forth the power of faith.

LESSON I

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Mar. 29.—The resurrection.—Matt. 28: 1-10. Tu.—The risen Christ.—Matt. 28: 11-20. Wed.—A lame beggar healed.—Acts 3: 1-10. Th.—Power of the risen Christ.—Acts 3: 11-26. Fr.—Faith in the risen Christ.—Acts 7: 51-60. Sat.—The resurrection gospel.—1 Cor. 15: 1-11. Su.—The risen Christ triumphant.—1 Cor. 15: 12-28.

The Resurrection—Easter Lesson.—Matthew 28: 1-10.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 5, 6)

SUPT.—1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mar'y Mag'da-lene and the other Mar'y to see the sepulchre.

School.—2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Je'sus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Gal'i-lee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Je'sus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then said Je'sus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Gal'i-lee, and there shall they see me.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. 3 His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: 4 and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men. 5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. 6 He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. 8 And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word. 9 And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. 10 Then saith Jesus unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Now is Christ risen from the dead. 1 Cor. 15: 20.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**Jesus died and rose again to give spiritual and eternal life to us.**

TOPIC.—**The first Easter day.**

OUTLINE.—**I. The empty tomb. II. Bearing the message. III. Meeting Jesus.**

TIME.—**Early Sunday morning, April 9, A. D. 30.**

PLACE.—**Jerusalem.**

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS.—**Mark 16: 1-20; Luke 24: 1-53; John 20, 21.**

INTRODUCTION.—We break away from the regular series of lessons to study once more the resurrection of Jesus. There is no fact connected with the life of Christ more clearly established than that of his resurrection, and with that fact proved, all the other events of his life are firmly fixed. The enemies of Jesus unconsciously prepared the way most thoroughly for the proof of his resurrection. They were eager for his death, and did not scruple to commit perjury and murder, but were at the same time so punctilious about observing the law of the Sabbath, that they would not allow the body of Jesus to remain on the cross on that day. The soldiers declared Jesus dead, therefore they did not break his bones, as was the custom, and to make sure that there was no mistake about his being taken from the cross with life in him, they pierced his side with a spear. As a precaution against Christ's disciples' stealing his body from the tomb, a guard of Roman soldiers was placed there, and the royal seal was placed on the stone which closed the entrance to the tomb. All these circumstances emphasize the reliability of the accounts of the resurrection of Christ which are given by the four writers of the Gospels and by Paul. The evangelists differ in their records regarding Christ's resurrection, but they do not contradict one another. The order of events on the morning of the resurrection seems to be this: The women approached the tomb, Mary Magdalene in advance, early in the morning; Mary Magdalene, seeing the stone rolled away from the door of the tomb, hastened to tell Peter and John; the other women arrived during Mary's absence; Peter and John arrived at the tomb, looked in and found it empty; Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, and later to the other women; the women reported to the disciples that they had seen the Lord.

COMMENTARY.—I. THE EMPTY TOMB (vs. 1-6). **1. in the end of the sabbath**—The Jewish Sabbath closed at sunset, but the night following is here mentioned. **first day of the week**—It was early on Sunday morning. **came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary**—Mary from Magdala, whom Jesus had cured of demoniacal possession. "The other Mary" was the sister of the mother of Jesus, and the mother of James the Less and Joses. With the two Marys came Salome (Mark 16: 1) and Joanna (Luke 24: 10). They had left their different homes at a very early hour, some while "it was yet dark" (John 20: 1), to reach the sepulcher at about daybreak. **to see the sepulchre**—Their purpose was to embalm the body of Jesus, since they had no thought that he would leave the tomb in the manner he did. **2. a great earthquake**—This occurred very early in the morning before the women reached the sepulcher. There was an earthquake attending Christ's crucifixion, and one attending his resurrection. **the angel of the Lord**—A messenger sent on a special errand. His mission was to roll back the stone, to overawe the guards and to show that Jesus' body was not removed from the tomb by the disciples. Luke and John speak of two angels, while

Matthew and Mark mention one. The fact that they mention but one does not prove that there were not two. **rolled back the stone**—A stone, in shape something like a mill-stone, was used to close the entrance to the sepulcher. Christ could have rolled it back himself, but angelic agency was employed in the great transaction. **sat upon it**—The Roman soldiers had guarded the closed and sealed tomb, and had been supernaturally overpowered; the angel was sitting by the tomb that had been supernaturally opened. The angel was there to explain the disappearance of the Lord. **3. his countenance**—"Appearance."—*R. V.* **like lightning**—Compare the appearance of the angel here described and that of Christ at the Transfiguration and that given in Rev. 1:14, 15. The appearance indicated a heavenly origin. **4. for fear of him**—The soldiers were guarding the tomb for fear that human hands might steal away the body of Jesus, and were not prepared for a heavenly visitation. **the watchers did quake** (*R. V.*)—Showing that their terror was genuine and extreme. **as dead men**—They were completely overcome by the experiences of that night. The earthquake and the dazzling splendor of the angel were more than they could endure.

5. the angel....said unto the women—It is probable that Mary Magdalene reached the tomb first and saw that the stone was rolled away. She hastened to tell Peter, and while she was gone the other women arrived and entered the sepulcher. They were naturally affrighted at the absence of Jesus and the circumstances attending his disappearance. One of the two angels mentioned by Luke and John spoke words of comfort to the women. **fear not ye**—The guards were terrified at the presence of the angels, but a message of comfort was borne to the women by the heavenly visitors. **I know**—A reassuring proof that the angels were divinely sent upon this especial mission. **was crucified**—The followers of Jesus believed that he was dead, for they went about the duty of embalming the body. Joseph of Arimathæa sought the privilege of burying the body in his own new tomb. Two places are claimed as the tomb of our Lord, and each of these places has its strong supporters. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher stands over the spot which is claimed to be the place of the crucifixion and burial of Christ. It is within the walls of Jerusalem, while the place where Christ suffered was without the gate. This location seems to lack the hill Calvary, or Golgotha. The church is held jointly by Greeks, Roman Catholics, Armenians and other sects, and adherents of these faiths now seem to worship places and images there instead of the living God. Outside the walls of the city on the north is a hill that many regard as Calvary. Its shape is like that of a skull. Close by is a garden and a tomb hewn out of the solid rock. The hill and the tomb both answer well the descriptions we have of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. It is the belief of many, that if either place is the tomb where our Lord was laid,—the one under the church in the city, or the one outside the walls on the north, known as the Garden Tomb,—the latter is the one. The Lord's body was placed in a tomb. The Roman officer had pronounced him dead, and the soldiers had pierced his side, so there could be no doubt of the fact of Christ's death. **6. he is risen**—A reason why he is not here. These words have ever furnished inspiration to the followers of Christ. He "was dead," but is "alive for evermore," and has "the keys of death and of hell." He has fulfilled his prophecy and promise. **see the place where the Lord lay**—As if to give further assurance and comfort. The fact that they sought Jesus showed their love for him, and his resurrection brought great gladness to their hearts. Christians of all ages have gathered encouragement and strength from this simple, yet forceful, recital of the resurrection of our Lord. They have been strengthened for the duties and conflicts of life, and have been encouraged to be true until death with the hope of a glorious immortality beyond this life.

II. Bearing the message (vs. 7, 8). **7. tell his disciples**—The sorrowing, despairing disciples must be told quickly that Jesus is risen. Peter's sad and penitent heart must be cheered. **into Galilee**—Before his crucifixion he had told his disciples that he would go before them into Galilee (Matt. 26:32; Mark 14:28). He appeared to them before going there, but his appearance to the greatest number of his followers was in Galilee. **8. departed quickly from the sepulchre**—There was no further attraction for them there since Jesus was gone. **with fear**—Because of the awe-inspiring, angelic visitation. **great joy**—Because of the resurrection of their glorious Lord. Their joy made them swift of foot. A marvelous change had come over them within a short time, perhaps within a few minutes. They had been almost in despair over the death of their Master. Through a lack of understanding and of faith they had nearly given up hope of the establishment of the new kingdom of which they had heard much. All was now changed. Jesus was alive, and their faith and hope would be greater than ever in the past from the very fact that he had risen from the dead. Their joy must have been very great.

III. Meeting Jesus (vs. 9, 10). **9. as they went**—In obedience to the angel's command. It was a glad message they were bearing. **Jesus met them**—This was the second appearance. The first appearance was to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9). It seems that when she told Peter and John of the empty tomb they at once ran to the sepulcher to see for themselves (John 20:2-10), and she also returned at once to the tomb. During her absence the other women had received their commission from the angel and had hurriedly left. Peter and John soon left also, and Mary remained alone at the tomb weeping. It was then that Jesus appeared to her (John 20:11-18). Later in the morning Jesus met the other women who had gone to tell the disciples, who were probably scattered and may have been some distance away. **all hail**—Literally, rejoice; the Greek salutation on meeting and parting. **10. shall they see me**—This public appointment was made in order that the whole body of disciples might meet the risen Lord. Five hundred were present on a mountain in Galilee.

QUESTIONS.—How long was Christ's body in the tomb? What proofs are there that he was dead? When did he rise from the dead? Who came early to the sepulcher? Why did they come? Describe the appearance of the angel. What was the angel's message to the women? To whom did our Lord first appear? How did the Jews explain the disappearance of Christ's body from the tomb? What were the feelings of the disciples when they learned that Christ had risen from the dead? What appointment did Jesus make with his disciples?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The purpose of a lesson on the resurrection of Christ. (1) The resurrection of Christ is fundamental to the Christian religion. (2) The entire body of Christian doctrine is bound up in it. (3) A comforting doctrine to believers. 2. The natural, human desire for immortality. 3. The doctrine of the resurrection in its relation to individual believers. 4. The resurrection of Christ and the spread of the gospel.

II. Theme.—The living Christ.

III. The women at the tomb.—1. Who were they? 2. The purpose for which they came and their preparation. 3. The time of their coming. 4. Apparent difficulties before them. 5. The motives that actuated them. 6. Previous examples of their devotion to Christ. 7. Their devotion was rewarded.

IV. The opened tomb.—1. The earthquake. 2. The angel. 3. The effect upon the guards. 4. No human eye beheld the resurrection. 5. Jesus laid down his life and he took it again. 6. Christ is alive forevermore. 7. The purpose for which the angel was present. (1) To overawe the guards. (2) To roll back the stone from the door of the tomb. (3) To explain the disappearance of our Lord. (4) To comfort the women. (5) To send them with a message to the disciples.

V. Meeting Jesus.—1. The obedience of the women to the command of the angel. 2. Their actions were prompted by love for Jesus. 3. There was evidence of a real desire to find Jesus and their efforts were successful. 4. Their gladness upon meeting Jesus. 5. Their reverence. 6. The message to the disciples appointing a meeting place in Galilee.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**The first Easter day.**

I. Completed man's redemption.
II. Introduced the gospel age.

I. Completed man's redemption. The first great Easter day was shedding its faint glimmering light through the surrounding darkness when holy women came with trembling steps but loving hearts to the sepulcher where Christ had been laid. It was a gloomy approach, characterized by visible grief, secret hope, timid faith. They came in earnest personal search, to render loving service and entire devotion to him whom the world had rejected. A wonderful sight met their eyes. An angel replied to their inward emotion. He understood their errand and their mistake. Gentle rebuke was in his words. He sat upon the stone which had sealed the tomb as in triumph to show that it was not to be replaced. Christ's humiliation was past. The hour of his triumph had come in the completion of human redemption. His atonement was accepted by the Father. His offering of himself for the sins of men had met every requirement. His resurrection was the seal of truth upon all he had said and done. The crucifixion was not simply a temporary incident in the history of Christ. It was an eternal principle in his kingdom. His resurrection crowned all that preceded it. The circumstances of his death with its attendant wonders were lost on the disciples until after his resurrection. They had forgotten all that the prophets had spoken, all that the Lord himself had said about his resurrection on the third day. They were enveloped in misery, disappointment and despondency, beclouded by many remorseful memories. The angel at the open tomb uttered momentous truths, furnishing proof of man's immortality and assurance of his redemption with definite hope for the future. The first work of the new dispensation was committed to the women. The angel bade them bear the tidings to the disciples.

II. Introduced the gospel age. The first day of new life dawned for humanity when Christ conquered death and came forth to greet his despairing disciples. It was the day which was to be consecrated throughout his church as the beginning of new hopes and new aspirations. The resurrection was the greatest victory ever obtained against an enemy. The explicit testimony of the angel and the instructions which followed sent the women in joyous return to the disciples who were to believe without seeing. The disciples had deserted their Master in his humiliation. They had not lingered at his cross nor aided in his burial. They were giving no thought to further care of his body. They were not honored with the vision and interview of angels. They were not the first to see their risen Lord. This wonderful experience was granted to the faithful women. They were commissioned to carry a message to the disciples. Their great joy overcame their fear. They did as they were bidden. Jesus met them with the most fitting salutation and benediction. They were all aglow with happy excitement, enraptured with the sight of their Lord. They were ardent with reverent love. They worshiped him. They were amazed at his glory, overcome and in fear. They were afraid they should lose their bliss. They held him by the feet. Their touch and their bended knee signified their faith in his resurrection. Jesus repeated the instruction of the angels and by them sent the first Easter greetings to the disciples whom he called brethren. It was a message of love and forgiveness, a gracious message full of comfort to the sorrowing, conscience-stricken apostles. The first principles of the gospel were set forth in that errand of the women, seeking the good of others with the assurance of their perfect forgiveness. Christ's appointment to meet his disciples in Galilee would prove their faith in him as their risen Lord. From Galilee his spiritual kingdom was to proceed. The circle gradually widened from the women to a great company as they were prepared to see and believe. In finding Christ the women and the disciples found everything suited to banish their fears. From him they received new life, new understanding, new instruction. That last dismal Jewish Sabbath was the dividing between the old dispensation and the new.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is the basis of all scripture truth. It is a twin sister to the doctrine of the atonement. Like the two main pillars of Solomon's temple, these two doctrines are the key truths of the entire plan of redemption, and into them all other truths interlock. Paul emphasizes this when he says, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

The resurrection of Christ is a ground of faith. "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17). The resurrection was the theme of the preaching on the day of Pentecost. It was the burden of Paul's message to the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers on Mars' Hill. It is the one doctrine that has the power to save those who believe in it. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). It is not a matter of surprise that Satan does his best to try to suppress this truth.

The resurrection of Christ is the basis of hope. "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10). The first Christian among the Basutos to die was a woman. Her brother came to the missionary to ask for a Christian burial, saying he wished to have her laid by for the day of her resurrection. "Just as the first ripe ears of corn which grew on the plains and the mountainsides of Palestine were immediately brought into the temple, and waved before the Lord, as a pledge that every ear of corn standing and growing should be safely reaped and gathered in, so the resurrection of Christ is a demonstration that we, his people, shall be raised again. If we sleep in Jesus, God will bring us with him; because he lives, we shall live also."

The resurrection of Christ is a stimulus to obedience. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:25, 26). The resurrection of the soul from the death of sin is a standing proof of the truth of the resurrection of the body, and of eternal life. The Indians of America had a tradition that Manaton was traveling in the invisible world, and that he came upon a hedge of thorns, and after a while he saw wild beasts glare upon him from the thicket; and then he saw an impassable river; but as he determined to proceed the thorns turned to phantoms, the wild beasts to powerless ghosts; the river, only the phantom of a river. So the believer finds that the grave has been robbed of its victory; death has lost its sting; death valley is but a shadow; while faith in a living Christ insures a hope big with immortality. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—Jesus arose from the dead.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE



The life of Jesus. As we begin our study of the Easter lesson, let us give a little attention to the life of our Lord. Give each of the children the opportunity of telling one or two things about him. Write on the board a word or two of each answer and thus form an outline of his life. Mention will be made of his birth and childhood and of his blessing little children. The fact will be noted that he spent the years of his public ministry in doing good to the souls and bodies of many of the people.

Jesus crucified. Jesus did nothing that should have made any one an enemy to him. He injured no one, but sought to help the people. Some hated him because he told them the truth about themselves. He told them that the things they were doing were wrong. It was those who were wicked, but who professed to be good, that hated him most. Note that in the trial of Jesus nothing evil was proved against him. False witnesses tried to make it appear that he was wicked, but they had no ground for what they were saying. Jesus died on the cross for us, that we might be saved.

Jesus in the tomb. Tell the story of Joseph of Arimathæa, who had made a new tomb by cutting an opening into the solid rock, and who went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, that he might place it in his tomb. The eleven disciples of Jesus and the women loved him and grieved over his death. The women went to the tomb on Saturday evening and saw where he was buried. Tell about the stone that closed the tomb, and about the seal and the guard.

Jesus alive. Tell the story of the earthquake, the frightened guards, the opened tomb and the angel's presence. The stone, the seal and the soldiers could not keep Jesus in the tomb. Tell about the visit of the women to the tomb early on Sunday morning. The Jewish Sabbath was past and they had bought material for embalming the body of Jesus. They were greatly surprised to find the tomb open and that the body of Jesus was not there. Jesus was dead when he was taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb, but he arose from the dead by divine power, just as he said he would. He laid down his life and he took it again.

Finding Jesus. Repeat the words the angel spoke to the women. They were words of comfort. Note the eagerness with which they ran to tell the news to the disciples. Jesus had said he would rise again, but neither the disciples nor the women seemed to understand him. Note that as the women went to tell the news of Christ's resurrection, they met Christ himself. It was a glad meeting. Their sorrow was turned into joy. Observe that Jesus made an appointment to meet his disciples in Galilee. The eleven met him there later.

LESSON II

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Apr. 5.—David anointed king.—1 Sam. 16: 1-13. Tu.—David with Saul.—1 Sam. 16: 14-23. Wed.—The covenant with David.—2 Sam. 7: 4-17. Th.—The covenant renewed.—Jer. 33: 14-26. Fr.—The covenant kept.—Acts 2: 22-36. Sat.—Pleading promises.—Psa. 132. Su.—The triumphant king.—Psa. 110.

David Anointed King.—1 Samuel 16: 1-23. Print 16: 4-13.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 12, 13)

SUPT.—4 And Sam'u-el did that which the Lord spake, and came to Beth'le-hem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

School.—5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jes'se and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on E-li'ab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.

7 But the Lord said unto Sam'u-el, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

8 Then Jes'se called A-bin'a-dab, and made him pass before Sam'u-el. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this.

9 Then Jes'se made Sham'mah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this.

10 Again, Jes'se made seven of his sons to pass before Sam'u-el. And Sam'u-el said unto Jes'se, The Lord hath not chosen these.

11 And Sam'u-el said unto Jes'se, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Sam'u-el said unto Jes'se, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

13 Then Sam'u-el took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon Da'vid from that day forward. So Sam'u-el rose up, and went to Ra'mah.

*AMERICAN REVISION

4 And Samuel did that which Jehovah spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably? 5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto Jehovah: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely Jehovah's anointed is before him. 7 But Jehovah said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for Jehovah seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart. 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen this. 9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath Jehovah chosen this. 10 And Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Jehovah hath not chosen these. 11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he is keeping the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him; for we will not sit down till he come hither. 12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon. And Jehovah said, Arise, anoint him; for this is he. 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. 1 Sam. 16: 7.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**True excellence is of the heart.**

TOPIC.—**Divine sovereignty.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Samuel sent to Bethlehem. II. The anointing of David. III. David called to Saul's court.**

TIME.—**B. C. 1079.**

PLACES.—**Ramah; Bethlehem.**

INTRODUCTION.—After the victory that came to Israel over the Philistines through the bravery of Jonathan and his armor-bearer, Saul fought successfully against the many enemies of his nation. The Lord sent Samuel with a message to him to the effect that he should make war upon the Amalekites because of their evil course toward Israel, and he should utterly destroy the people and their flocks and herds. Saul entered upon a campaign against the Amalekites and overcame them, but spared Agag, the king, and the best of the flocks and herds. Samuel rebuked Saul for his disobedience and said, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (ch. 15: 22). Because of this transgression, in addition to others which Saul had committed, Samuel brought the message to him that the kingdom would be taken from him and given to another who was better than he. Samuel had been Saul's adviser, but from this time he left Saul to his own ways; yet he mourned for him, being grieved over his failure to obey the Lord and perform his duty as king.

COMMENTARY.—I. SAMUEL SENT TO BETHLEHEM (vs. 1-5). **1-3.** While Samuel was mourning over Saul's rejection, the Lord told him not to grieve longer; but to take prepared oil and go to Bethlehem, for he had chosen a king from the family of Jesse. Samuel feared what Saul might do to him if he should anoint another to be king in his place. The Lord told him to arrange to offer a sacrifice there, and call Jesse to the sacrifice and he would show him what to do. Samuel was accustomed to hold religious meetings at various places. It was not necessary for him to reveal to Saul the fact that he was about to anoint one as king. **4. came to Bethlehem**—Bethlehem is about ten miles south of Ramah where Samuel lived. In making the journey he doubtless passed close to the site of Jerusalem. **elders of the town trembled**—Sam-

uel was a prophet and one of his duties was to rebuke sin, and the leaders in the city were afraid that some particular wrong had been committed, for which they were to be reproved. It has been suggested that they feared to receive Samuel, since by doing so they might incur Saul's displeasure. **comest thou peaceably**—The people of Bethlehem desired to know whether Samuel's visit to the place meant anything ill to them. **5. I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord**—Samuel had not only come peaceably, but he had also come to observe a religious rite. **sanctify yourselves**—The people were to get ready for the sacrifice by washing their bodies and their clothes (Exod. 19:10). **come with me to the sacrifice**—The invitation to this religious service was general. **he sanctified Jesse and his sons**—Samuel gave special attention to the members of this family, that they might be ceremonially clean. It is probable that others were invited to the sacrifice, but only Jesse and his family were present at the feast which followed. Particulars regarding the sacrifice and the feast are wanting, since the anointing of David is the principal event.

II. The anointing of David (vs. 6-13). **6. when they were come**—The sons of Jesse came into the presence of Samuel. It is quite possible that Samuel made known to Jesse that he was about to anoint one of his sons, but did not say for what purpose it was to be done. **said**—To himself. **the Lord's anointed is before him**—Eliab by his height and his countenance seemed the natural counterpart of Saul, whose successor the prophet came to select; but the day was gone when kings were chosen because they were head and shoulders taller than the rest.—*Stanley.* **7. the Lord said**—Samuel was in direct communication with Jehovah. Dr. Clarke thinks that his communion with God was as close and full as was that of Moses. **look not on his countenance,** etc.—Samuel could see only the outside, but God was looking within, and would indicate to Samuel his choice. **I have refused him**—The Lord had seen all that Samuel saw and had passed Eliab by. **the Lord looketh on the heart**—God first gave the people a king of stately stature and majestic appearance, such as they would have chosen for themselves (ch. 10:24); now he will choose "a man after his own heart" on the true ground of his inner moral worth.—*Cam. Bib.* It is a comforting thought to the true child of God that he looks on the heart and sees all that is there. The wicked may well tremble for the same reason.

8. neither hath the Lord chosen this—These are the words of Samuel as Abinadab was brought before him. The Lord made it clear to Samuel that he was not the one whom he was to anoint. **9. Shammah**—He is called Shimeah in 2 Sam. 13:3. **10. again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass**—"And Jesse made seven of his sons to pass."—*R. V.* The seven included the three who had already passed before Samuel. **the Lord hath not chosen these**—If Jesse had been told by Samuel that one of his sons was to be anointed, he might possibly have been tempted to doubt the word of the prophet, for the most likely of his sons, as he regarded them, had been rejected. **11. are here all thy children**—Samuel was convinced that not all of Jesse's sons were present, for he was to anoint one, and all those who had passed before him had been rejected. **there remaineth yet the youngest**—He was probably a youth of eighteen years. **he keepeth the sheep**—It was doubtless necessary for one to look after the sheep, and as it seemed unlikely that this young and inexperienced lad would be chosen, he was left to act as shepherd. He was performing well his humble task when the call came that indicated the way to higher duties. **we will not sit down**—To eat the sacrificial feast.

12. he was ruddy—The language indicates that David had auburn hair and a fair complexion. In those lands red, or golden, hair and a fair skin were considered especially beautiful. **of a beautiful countenance**—Rather, "beautiful as to the eyes." This indicates that his eyes were keen and penetrating, enlivened by the fires of genius, and beaming with a generous warmth.—*Whedon.* **goodly to look to**—Of an attractive appearance. **this is he**—The Lord was in charge of the entire affair and made his will definitely known to Samuel, item by item. **13. Samuel took the horn of oil**—He had brought it with him according to divine directions. Samuel had anointed Saul king and probably used the oil with which men were anointed for the priesthood. The oil used on such occasions was carefully prepared. **anointed him in the midst of his brethren**—It appears that the anointing took place in Jesse's house in the presence of the family. None of the members of the family knew the purpose of the anointing. They might have supposed that Samuel did it to set him apart to make him a student in his school of the prophets. It is probable that David himself did not understand the significance of the anointing, yet Josephus thinks that Samuel took David by himself and whispered to him the reason for it. **the Spirit of the Lord came upon David**—A spirit of prudence to behave himself wisely upon all occasions; with a spirit of courage, so that he durst grapple with a lion and a bear; and the spirit of prophecy, in which he was afterward very eminent. In short, a spirit fit for a prince.—*Patrick.* It is recorded of Saul that, after his anointing, he would be changed into another man (ch. 10:6), so David came to be more and more fully prepared to undertake the duties of king.

III. David called to Saul's court (vs. 14-23). David was soon to exchange his place as a shepherd boy for one in Saul's court. This came about through a peculiar train of providences. Because of Saul's wicked course the Spirit of God departed from him and an evil spirit, by God's permission or direction, took possession of him. He may have become mentally affected and the evil spirit came upon him at times to make him violent. His servants knew of the efficacy of music to quiet some who were thus affected, and they advised Saul to secure some one skilled in the use of the harp to play before him. One of the servants knew of David's skill and advised sending for him. David was thus introduced to Saul and pleased him well. He was successful in quieting the king when the evil spirit came upon him. David was in the royal court in a far different capacity from that in which he was to be there a few years later.

QUESTIONS.—Against what enemies of Israel did Saul fight successfully? What command did God give regarding the Amalekites? In what did Saul do wrong? How did Samuel feel about Saul's course? What command came to Samuel from the Lord? Describe the anointing of David. How does God judge men? How was David brought into contact with Saul?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. Saul's successful warfare against many enemies of Israel after the victory at Michmash. 2. God's command through Samuel to Saul respecting the Amalekites. 3. Saul's disobedience in sparing the king and the best of the flocks and herds. 4. Samuel's reproof and Saul's excuse. 5. Saul's confession. 6. The kingdom to be taken from him and given to another. 7. The present lesson introduces us to him who is to succeed Saul.

II. Theme.—God's choice of a king.

III. Saul's visit to Bethlehem.—1. Samuel's sorrow over the course Saul had taken. 2. God's rejection of Saul after he had chosen him king was because of his disobedience. 3. God's change of attitude toward Saul was because of Saul's changed attitude toward him. 4. The new king was to come from another family. 5. Samuel's fear of Saul. 6. Samuel's twofold mission to Bethlehem. (1) The ostensible purpose was to sacrifice. (2) In connection with that was the purpose to anoint David king over Israel. 7. The fear of the elders of Bethlehem at the approach of Samuel.

IV. The anointing of David.—1. The call to the people of Bethlehem to the sacrifice. 2. Preparations for the sacrifice. 3. Special mention of Jesse and his sons. 4. The ancestry of Jesse (Ruth 4:13-22). 5. The passing of Jesse's sons before Samuel. 6. God made clear to Samuel his choice of David. 7. David anointed. 8. The gift to him of the Spirit. 9. The fitness of David for kingship.

V. David and Saul.—1. Saul's malady. 2. A cure suggested. 3. David's skill in music. 4. His call to Saul's court came while caring for sheep. 5. David's playing relieved Saul's malady. 6. Saul's affection for David. 7. David being prepared for his life-work.

Practical Survey

Topic.—Divine sovereignty.

I. Declared the vacancy of a throne.
II. Provided for a nation's uplift.

I. Declared the vacancy of a throne. The lesson before us introduces a new phase in the development of God's purposes, showing how he determines his own methods for the accomplishment of his own ends. The changes which history reveals prove that the Ruler of the universe is never at fault. Saul had unfitted himself to carry out the divine plan, but God was not at the end of his resources. The son of Jesse could take the place of the son of Kish. The special faculty and power by which Saul had been prepared for his kingly work were withdrawn from him. He lost the special enduement of power which had enabled him to subdue his enemies and to order his kingdom. He was smarting under Samuel's words, writhing under the sentence of deposition. He was stirred to neutralize, if possible, the divine verdict. When Samuel charged him with his transgression, the whole impurity of his character came to view. His sin was followed by lamentable effects in his mental and moral nature, and doubtless also in his physical constitution. This affliction as a result mainly of his own misconduct, bore the character of a divine retribution, that he might know that it was an evil and bitter thing to depart from God and thus be constrained to turn to God for help. When Saul had proved himself unworthy to reign longer over Israel, a train of influences was put into operation to bring a more worthy man to the throne. Samuel was summoned to undertake a new commission and provide a new leader for God's chosen people.

II. Provided for a nation's uplift. Saul had been the nation's choice for saving the people. David was God's provision for raising them to a high standard. God alone knew the spiritual work to be done by the coming king and he alone could see the latent qualities in David by which it could be performed. The historical narrative commences where David's life became an instrument of service for God, when he was anointed by the aged Samuel, the last and greatest of the judges. The anointing of David was not only the designation of a successor to Saul, it was also the crowning and perfecting of the long influence of Samuel on David's heart and character. The aged prophet had conferred many benefits on his native land, but none could compare in importance with his eager care for its youth. Although by Samuel's act the youthful David was now anointed, he was yet to be trained to become a king. This God effected by methods of his own. Saul knew nothing of the anointing of David. Samuel took no steps to dethrone Saul or to alienate the people from him. The kingdom was undisturbed though a new king was anointed. Jesse did not know the great man he had among his sons. To Samuel was given the blessed work of discovering men. From whatever side we view the life of David it is remarkable. After the interview with Samuel David resumed his former position and avocation, but with new thoughts, new hopes, new practises and with an exalted mind and increased piety. David's early employment had a direct and divine bearing upon his later life. As a shepherd the sense of responsibility to another was powerfully called into exercise. It was his part to give special attention to the weak, the helpless and the distressed of his flock. Self-sacrifice for others was the ruling principle of the shepherd and later of the king. Great warrior though he was, the spirit most congenial to David was that of peaceful development and progress. To the people of Israel he felt that he stood in the same relation as he had occupied to his father's sheep, and to God in the same relation in which he had stood to his father. David had that inner consecration, without which the outward anointing was an unmeaning ceremony. It appeared to be God's purpose in sending David to Saul as his musician to afford the king a new and last means of grace. The temporary calm which the soft tones of David's harp spread over the stormy soul of Saul was but a superficial emotion which did not lead to repentance. T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Guilt inspires fear (v. 4). Because the prophet of the Lord suddenly appeared among them, the people trembled with fear. They were self-convicted of sin. This saying is true, "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." A preacher of the seventeenth century illustrates the point in the quaint style of the times as follows: "It is recorded of that reverend martyr, Bishop Latimer, that he took especial care in the placing of his words before Bonner, because he heard the pen walking in the chimney, behind the cloth, setting down all he said. So ought we circumspectly to look to all our sayings and doings; for conscience, as a scribe or register, sitting in the closet of our hearts, with pen in hand, makes a diurnal of all our ways, sets down the time when, the place where, the manner how, things were performed; and that so clear and evident, that go where we will, do what we can, the characters of them shall never be canceled or razed out, till God appear in judgment."

The law of selection (v. 7). The so-called scientific world has much to say about the law of selection, and the survival of the fittest. The idea is largely based upon the best from the external point of view, but God makes his choice according to character. He is looking for men. Social programs are valuable only as they contribute to the making of character. We can not put a man on the scales and weigh him, or stand him against the wall and measure him to determine how much man we have. How slow we are to learn that an attractive exterior may conceal a false and faithless heart; that the value of a deed depends not on the scale on which it was done, but upon the motives which inspired it; that the only true greatness, whether of men or actions, is that which is moral and spiritual. That which is temporal soon passes away, but that which is spiritual abides.

Only a boy (v. 11). In Scotland many years ago, a faithful minister was waited upon one day by one of his deacons, who seemed to be under a great burden. "I came early to meet you," he said. "I have something on my conscience to tell you. There must be something wrong with your preaching and work; there has been but one person added to the church in a whole year, and he is only a boy." The old minister went into the pulpit that day with a grieved and heavy heart. He lingered in the church to pray, after the rest had gone. He wished to be alone. He had labored hard for years, only to be told at last that his work was no longer blessed. At last he became conscious that he was not alone as he supposed. It was "only a boy." "Well, Robert," said the minister, "what is it?" "Do you think if I were willing to work hard for an education I could ever become a preacher?" "A preacher?" "Perhaps a missionary?" There was a long pause. Tears filled the eyes of the old minister. At length he said, "This heals the ache in my heart, Robert. I see the divine hand now. Yes, I think you will become a preacher." That boy was Robert Moffat. He was "only a boy," but the measure of that old minister's reward will be found in the gathered fruitage of the labors of Robert Moffat, the great African missionary. How many boys are there in our Sunday-school classes now whom God would have do great things for him? G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—A shepherd boy was chosen to be king of Israel.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Saul rejected
David anointed
David and Saul

The connection. Last week we had a lesson on the resurrection of Christ, and the week before we had a review lesson. The lesson before that was about Jonathan and his armor-bearer. Let the class tell something about the attack these two men made upon the stronghold of the Philistines. After the victory at Michmash Saul fought against the enemies of Israel on all sides of their country and was successful.

Saul rejected. Tell the story of the attack that Amalek made upon the children of Israel after they left Egypt and before they reached Sinai. Give a picture of the army of Israel under Joshua fighting against the Amalekites and Moses standing upon a hilltop holding up his hands. While Moses held up his hands Israel was stronger, and when he let them drop Amalek was stronger. Moses sat upon a rock and Aaron helped him hold up one hand and Hur the other, and thus Israel became victorious (Exod. 17:8-14). God told Samuel to tell Saul to fight the Amalekites and utterly destroy them, because they were exceedingly wicked and had been injurious to the Israelites. Tell the story of Saul's victory over them and of his failure to destroy Agag, the king, and the best of the flocks and herds. Saul did not obey the Lord and he thought he would make up for his disobedience by making a great sacrifice of cattle and sheep to the Lord. Impress the lesson of obedience upon the children. Many partially obey what their parents tell them and then have their own way in part. Because Saul was disobedient the Lord told Samuel the kingdom would be taken away from him.

David anointed. Recall the anointing of Saul by Samuel at God's command, and then tell the story of Samuel's being sent to Bethlehem to anoint David king. The call of Jesse and his sons by Samuel and his selection of David are interesting. David was in the field caring for sheep and Samuel sent for him. The Lord told Samuel that David was the one whom he should anoint king. David was the son of Jesse and Jesse was the grandson of Ruth, of whom we learned in our study a few weeks ago. It was a great surprise to David to be chosen and anointed by the prophet. He may not have known just why he was thus selected, but he would know later.

David and Saul. Note the affliction that came to Saul. An evil spirit came upon him and he acted at times like an insane man. Tell the story of the call of David to come to him and play on the harp to quiet him. Picture David walking from Bethlehem, driving a donkey laden with bread and wine, and going northward toward Gibeah. Note the fact that David's music relieved Saul, and Saul loved him.

LESSON III

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Apr. 12.—The shepherd psalm.—Psa. 23. Tu.—The good Shepherd.—John 10: 1-13. Wed.—The Shepherd's love.—John 10: 14-24. Th.—The Shepherd's gift.—John 10: 25-38. Fr.—The good Shepherd rejected.—Zech. 11: 4-14. Sat.—The chief Shepherd.—1 Peter 5: 1-11. Su.—The seeking Shepherd.—Luke 15: 1-10.

The Shepherd Psalm.—Psalm 23: 1-6.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 1-6)

SUPT.—1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

School.—2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside still waters.
3 He restoreth my soul:
He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me:
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou hast anointed my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah for ever.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—The Lord is my shepherd. Psa. 23: 1.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord guides, protects and provides for his people.**

TOPIC.—**Divine fellowship.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Provision. II. Guidance. III. Protection. IV. Comfort.**

TIME.—**Uncertain, but probably toward the close of David's life.**

PLACE.—**A picture of shepherd life in Palestine.**

INTRODUCTION.—David is the writer of this psalm. It is not likely that he wrote it while he was yet following the occupation of a shepherd, caring for his father's sheep about Bethlehem, but rather during the later years of his life, after he had passed through many of the depressing and joyous experiences that came in great numbers to him. He then recalled vividly his life as a shepherd, enriching the imagery from his observation of shepherd life in various parts of his country. In the scriptures the relation existing between God and his people is very frequently represented under the figure of a shepherd and his sheep, and it is most fitting that it should be so. In the land where the Bible was written every one was familiar with the shepherd's occupation, and it is not surprising that in both the Old Testament and in the New this figure should be often used. "There is no inspired title to this psalm, and none is needed, for it records no special event, and needs no other key than that which every Christian may find in his own bosom. It is David's 'Heavenly Pastoral'; a surpassing ode, which none of the daughters of music can excel."

COMMENTARY.—I. PROVISION (vs. 1, 2). 1. the Lord is my shepherd—This general statement expresses the condition of a submissive, trusting child of God in his relation to the great Shepherd. It expresses the author's confidence in Jehovah. The psalm throughout is taken up with the figure of the shepherd and his sheep. The relation is a most tender one. There are mutual confidence and love. The shepherd has full control of the sheep and his great care is for their welfare. What a shepherd was to his sheep in Palestine in David's time, and conditions are still practically the same as they were then, the Lord is to his people now. We note the use of the possessive pronoun, "my," in this clause. David claimed Jehovah as his personal Shepherd. It was not enough to be assured that he was the Shepherd of Israel. That was a great blessing to Israel as a nation, but David was an individual and as such he craved and obtained the assurance that Jehovah was his Shepherd, and had a care for him personally. **I shall not want**—In consequence of the relation expressed in the preceding clause, David declared definitely that his needs would all be met. He would not want for provision, for the resources of Jehovah are boundless. He would not lack guidance, for his Shepherd was infinite in wisdom. He would not lack protection, for Jehovah is the Almighty. He would not want for comfort, for God is the Comforter of his people. David expressed full confidence in God. He did not know all that was in the future, yet he was bold to declare that in times of peace or in times of trouble, in health or in sickness, in the strength of manhood or in the feebleness of old age, he should not want. He should not lack any good thing, whether of a temporal nature or spiritual.

2. he maketh me to lie down in green pastures—This and the following verses of the psalm follow up the general statement made in the first verse and give the particulars in which Jehovah acts as the Shepherd of his people. It was no small task for the shepherd to find always suitable pastures for his sheep. The figure here denotes an abundance of rich herbage. This is an expressive figure, as we consider conditions in Palestine. During the months when rain falls there is a plentiful growth of grass and there is no difficulty in

finding pasturage; but during the long period of rainless days and nights, the vegetation is dried up and the ground is parched. Then the shepherd must exercise great care to find pasture for his sheep. In the figure there is plenty of herbage. The sheep graze until their hunger is appeased and they lie down in the grass. **he leadeth me beside the still waters**—Pasturage and water meet the needs of sheep as far as sustenance is concerned. In Palestine during the dry season there are comparatively few living streams. There are many wadies, or watercourses, which are torrents in the wet season, but are dry in summer. The shepherd must take care that during the latter part of the day he may lead his flock to a supply of water. There are streams that are swift. Sheep are timid creatures, and helpless as well, and must be led to quiet waters to quench their thirst. Hence the shepherd knows where there are wells or fountains at which his sheep may slake their thirst, and this whether it is in the dry season or in the wet. So the great Shepherd is abundantly able to provide for his sheep at all times, under all circumstances.

II. Guidance (v. 3). **3. he restoreth my soul**—The Syrian shepherd knows his sheep by name, even though there may be hundreds in his flock. He watches carefully lest one should stray away and go into danger. If one should become injured in any way the shepherd nurses it carefully and seeks to restore it to strength and health. In a spiritual sense the Lord refreshes the weary. He gives "power to the faint." If one should fall out by the way, the great Shepherd seeks after the lost one in an effort to restore him. **he leadeth me**—Shepherd life in Syria is very different from that with which we are familiar. Here, sheep are placed in enclosed pastures and are there provided with food and water. No wild beasts or robbers threaten them and they are not in need of constant guidance to lead them into places of pasture, water and safety; there, no flock is seen grazing without a shepherd. The shepherd goes ahead of his flock and the sheep follow. **in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake**—Whatever God may give us to do we would do it, led by his love. Some Christians overlook the blessing of sanctification, and yet to a thoroughly renewed heart this is one of the sweetest gifts of the covenant. If we could be saved from wrath, and yet remain unregenerate, impenitent sinners, we should not be saved as we desire, for we mainly and chiefly pant to be saved from sin and led in the way of holiness. All this is done out of pure, free grace; "for his name's sake." It is to the honor of our great Shepherd that we should be a holy people, walking in the narrow way of righteousness. If we be so led and guided, we must not fail to adore our heavenly Shepherd's care. —*Spurgeon.*

III. Protection (vs. 4, 5). **4. through the valley of the shadow of death**—One needs to see Palestine in the summer season to appreciate the force of this expression. There are deep ravines, with dangerous precipices and infested with wolves and other wild beasts, and where robbers lurk, into which the sunlight comes but little. Outside of these ravines the sun shines and its glaring light falls upon the bare soil and rocks, and the contrast is so great that the deep ravines are fittingly called the valley of the shadow of death. This represents the times of distress in the Christian's life when the trial of faith is great, and such times come to all. **I will fear no evil**—There is danger, but the shepherd guards his flock as a whole and each sheep in particular, and the sheep hear his voice and trustingly follow him. There is danger of the Christian's falling at such times as are here represented, but with confidence in God and a heart made clean through the blood of Christ he can say, "I will fear no evil." **for thou art with me**—This is the explanation of the assurance of safety. The presence of the great Shepherd makes hard places easy and dangerous places safe. God ever says to his true followers, "I am with thee." **thy rod and thy staff they comfort me**—The rod is a shepherd's weapon to ward off robbers and wild beasts. It is a heavy club two or three feet long. It promises safety and hence is a comfort. The staff is the shepherd's crook. It is six or seven feet long and has a hook at the upper end. With this the shepherd draws back the sheep from dangerous places or guides it in the right direction. With it he may pull the sheep out of a pit or cleft of the rock.

5. thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies—Some think the figure changes here and the children of God are enjoying a banquet of spiritual good, but it seems rather that it is the continuation of the former figure, and there is a figure within a figure. The shepherd leads his sheep into a good pasture and they feed in safety, although there are robbers and wild beasts around them. God supplies his children with grace and joy in the face of the assaults of Satan. **thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over**—Here begins the beautiful picture at the end of the day. The psalm has sung of the whole round of the day's wanderings, all the need of the sheep, all the care of the shepherd. Now the scene closes with the last scene of the day. At the door of the sheepfold the shepherd stands and "the rodding of the sheep" takes place. The shepherd stands turning his body to let the sheep pass; he is the door as Christ said of himself. With his rod he holds back the sheep while he inspects them one by one as they pass into the fold. He has the horn filled with olive oil and he has cedar-tar, and he anoints a knee bruised on the rocks or a side scratched by thorns. And here comes one that is not bruised, but is simply worn and exhausted; he bathes its face and head with the refreshing olive oil, and he takes the large two-handled cup and dips it brimming full from the vessel of water provided for that purpose, and he lets the weary sheep drink. There is nothing finer in the psalm than this. God's care is not for the wounded only, but for the worn and weary also.—*Knight.*

IV. Comfort (v. 6). **6. goodness and mercy shall follow me**—As God had blessed David in the past, he would continue until the end of life. The past was a pledge for the future. **in the house of the Lord**—The blessings represented in the psalm are spiritual. The author had confidence that he would have an eternal home with God.

QUESTIONS.—When and by whom was this psalm written? What relation is maintained in this psalm? In what sense is Christ a Shepherd? How does an Eastern shepherd care for his sheep? What is meant by still waters? In what sense does the Christian's cup run over? What is meant by dwelling in the house of the Lord?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The points of contact between this lesson and the previous one. (1) David has to do with each. (2) David was a shepherd and this is a shepherd psalm. 2. The Book of Psalms. (1) Authorship. (2) Poetry. (3) Devotional. (4) Spiritual. 3. Among the figures used in the scriptures to represent the relation existing between God and his people, that of the shepherd and his sheep is prominent.

II. Theme.—Christ the shepherd.

III. Provision.—1. Conditions in Palestine as to pasturage and water. 2. Foresight on the part of the shepherd is necessary. 3. The capable shepherd provides food and water even in the dry season. 4. The figure used in the psalm indicates an abundant supply. 5. Full confidence is expressed by David in the great Shepherd. 6. Christ's ability to meet all demands.

IV. Guidance.—1. As pertaining to the flock, guidance is twofold. (1) To lead to pasturage and water. (2) To lead in safe places. 2. Christ's ability to guide us. 3. Christ's love for us assures us of safe guidance. 4. He leads in ways of righteousness and true holiness. 5. Through his mercy he leads us to eternal blessedness.

V. Protection.—1. Many dangers threatened the flocks of Palestine. (1) Precipices. (2) Swift streams. (3) Robbers. (4) Wild beasts. 2. The absence of fear. 3. The significance of the "rod." Of the "staff." 4. The many promises of the scriptures which speak of divine protection.

VI. Comfort.—1. The great Shepherd has regard for all the needs of his flock. 2. The earthly shepherd notices each sheep, calls each by name, sees whether they are injured or not and knows how each one thrives. 3. The sheep of Christ's fold are comforted here and are to be comforted forever.

Practical Survey

Topic.—Divine fellowship.

I. Insures the possession of good.
II. Secures protection from harm.
III. Affords assurance of victory.

I. Insures the possession of good. This psalm, so personal and tender, sets forth the weighty theme that feeble man may have constant companionship with the mighty and everlasting God. It breathes in every line the air of serene and happy confidence undisturbed by a single doubt. The world could spare many a large book better than this sunny little psalm. It is the utterance of personal trust in Jehovah, darkened by no fears or complaints and so perfectly at rest that it has no more to ask. It sings of many mercies which the believer receives and traces them all to one source, the great Shepherd himself. David, the royal poet, puts a spiritual meaning into the various experiences of his shepherd life, and ascribes the peace and happiness of his own life to the kindly guidance of God. He had a most vivid perception that the feast, the anointing, the fulness, all came from the divine hand. The expression, "I shall not want," is absolute and unlimited. Food, protection, guidance, care, sympathy, repose, restoration are all anticipated. For a time desire is stilled in satisfaction, repose and serene enjoyment. Appetite is allayed, anxieties dispelled, the whole nature satisfied, and repose is found in the affluence of divine love. The possession of all gifts is found in possessing the Father. David had learned the lesson of weariness. He had passed under discipline. He had learned to know himself. He had learned to know God. He was glad simply to trust and let himself be taken care of. By the thoughtfulness, tenderness, sympathy and care he had exercised in his shepherd calling, David learned and realized the heart and character of the great Shepherd. While the psalm is not the utterance of shepherd days it perpetuates their memory. David here teaches that peace and rest do not depend upon the absence of life's burdens, but wholly upon the shepherding of God. He had consented to follow his guidance. He was relying upon God to save him from making a wrong decision in critical moments, from failure in making the most of his powers and opportunities and finally to conduct him to mansions above.

II. Secures protection from harm. "Fear no evil," no apprehension of real or ultimate injury. Trust in the divine Shepherd is an antidote to all alarm. The answer to all doubt is, "Thou art with me." It is the utterance of a soul absolutely unshaken and perfectly serene. With perfect composure and serenity the psalmist looked forward to the time when he was to pass through the "valley." The prospect heightened his triumph by that security which the presence of his Guardian afforded him. His experience was ripe for the change. He could anticipate the event with confidence. He looked upon the Shepherd as the Master of death. Exquisite simplicity marked his anticipation of the valley. His habitual communion with God prepared him for death. His confidence in God gave strength for life's work, gave support under life's trials, secured the fulfilment of life's great hopes. The fact that Jehovah condescended to be his shepherd was the underlying basis of all his rich experience.

III. Affords assurance of victory. The psalm is a song of gratitude, of hope, of consecration, a song of the soul on its way to heaven. It exhibits the pleasing picture of a pious man rejoicing in the goodness of heaven. To David the events of life were displays of God's goodness and mercy, at the close of which he would bring his own to his everlasting habitation. The last verse of the psalm summarizes what went before with the additional thought of continuance. It is the permanence of heaven that is one of the greatest joys in prospect, a most complete picture of happiness. The blessedness of this psalm is found in the sublimity of its sentiments, the delightful spirit it breathes and the hallowed impression it produces. God is presented in closest relations with individual life and experience.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Because the Lord is our shepherd,

We shall not want rest (v. 2). This is the picture of satisfaction. The three things essential to rest are all provided: safety, sufficiency of food and the presence of the shepherd.

We shall not want leadership (v. 2). The paths of life are intersected by many false trails. Hidden dangers lurk by the wayside. The wild beasts crouch here and there. But the great Shepherd leads unerringly on, until wearied, we come to the stillness of the deep waters.

We shall not want restoration (v. 3). The maelstrom of lust and sin had caught David and threatened to cast him out on the reefs, a wreck. But out of the depths of despair his cry for help flung itself up to the very throne of God. The broken bones were healed, the crimson of sin was cleansed, and on the rock of deliverance David sang the new song of restoration. The tender picture of the shepherd seeking the lost sheep, as given by Christ, is the message of hope to every wandering one to look for restoration.

We shall not want righteousness (v. 3). An old parable represents human nature as a chariot drawn by two horses: one of them high-spirited and aspiring; the other tame, heavy and slow. The driver, unable to equalize them, finds the chariot turning, now this way and now that. When the Master takes the reins, we are brought into the paths of righteousness.

We shall not want companionship (v. 4). Where have you come in the journey of life? Is the valley just ahead? Are you still in the precipitous mountain passes? Are you beset by enemies? His presence is near to drive away fear, his staff will be your support, his rod will terrorize your enemies.

We shall not want courage (v. 5). At the battle of Manila Bay, after a portion of the Spanish fleet had been destroyed by the American navy, Admiral Dewey drew his vessels a little to one side, and while the Spaniards kept up their cannonading the Americans had breakfast served, and ate it in the presence of their enemies. Martyrs have been blessedly sustained amid torture and have been made inexpressibly happy while their persecutors have looked on in amazement. They had courage to adhere to right principles and to declare what God had done for them, even when they knew that they did so at the risk of their lives.

We shall not want joy (v. 5). Oil is a symbol of joy. See Heb. 1:9. A Protestant who was shut up in a dark coal-cellar in London on account of his faith, was reprimanded because he made so much noise. He said, "The world wonders we can be merry under such extreme miseries, but our God is omnipotent, who turns our misery into joy. I have so much joy that, though I be in a place of darkness and mourning, yet I can not lament, but both day and night am full of joy. I never was so merry before; the Lord's name be praised forever."

We shall not want a home (v. 6). "Almost well and nearly at home," said the dying Baxter. A martyr, when approaching the stake, in answer to a question as to how he felt, said, "Never better; for now I know that I am almost home." Then looking over the meadows to the place where he was to be burned, he said, "Only two more stiles to get over, and I am at my Father's house."

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—Christ tenderly cares for his followers.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE



The writer of this psalm. In our lesson last week we were introduced to David. Let the class tell all they can about him. He was a young man, strong, good-looking, obedient and lovable. He was unexpectedly called to be anointed. Tell about his skill in music and his ability to write psalms. The Lord inspired him to write the psalms. We have a most beautiful and touching one for the lesson to-day. The children should all commit it to memory if they have not already done so. We think of David's trust in God as we read this psalm.

The shepherd feeds his flock. Some of the children have seen flocks of sheep in America; others perhaps have never seen such a sight. Explain how the shepherd in the land where David dwelt took his flock each morning out of the fold in the city or village and went with it to a place where there was pasture and stayed with it all day. He led the sheep to a place where they could drink, and took them home at night, but sometimes the shepherds watched their flocks in the fields at night. Many places are barren, but the thoughtful shepherd takes care to find pasture for his flock.

The shepherd guides his flock. Tell about the many hills and ravines in Palestine. Many steep hills are to be found and dangerous places. The shepherd learns where the sheep can find pasture and where the dangers are. Have the children seen a shepherd's staff, or crook, or a picture of one? The long stick with a hook on the end is used to guide the sheep if they start to go in the wrong way. The shepherd goes before his flock. They follow him. They have confidence in him.

The shepherd protects his flock. The shepherd knows all his sheep by name and the sheep know their names and respond when they are called. He knows the dangers to which the sheep are exposed. There are the precipices and the poisonous plants from which the sheep must be kept. There are wild beasts, such as wolves and panthers, and there are robbers that would steal the sheep. The sheep are liable to be bruised or become exhausted. The shepherd uses his rod, or club, to drive off wild beasts and robbers, and he uses oil and water to dress the wounds of the injured and to refresh the weary or sick.

Christ the good Shepherd. Let the class suggest in what way Christ is the good Shepherd. Write on the board the title, "The Good Shepherd," and as the children tell how Christ is our Shepherd write the suggestions on the board. He owns his sheep; he loves them; he feeds them; he gives them drink; he protects them; he leads them; he knows them and they know him. The followers of Jesus trust him and go willingly where he leads them.

LESSON IV

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Apr. 19.—David and Goliath.—1 Sam. 17:38-51. Tu.—Goliath's challenge.—1 Sam. 17:1-11. Wed.—David's visit to the camp.—1 Sam. 17:12-27. Th.—The challenge accepted.—1 Sam. 17:28-37. Fr.—Spiritual victory.—2 Tim. 4:1-8. Sat.—God a sure refuge.—Psa. 46. Su.—Divine protection.—Psa. 91.

David and Goliath.—1 Samuel 17: 1-54. Print 17: 38-51.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verse, 45)

SUPT.—38 And Saul armed Da'vid with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

School.—39 And Da'vid girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And Da'vid said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And Da'vid put them off him.

40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Phil'is-tine.

41 And the Phil'is-tine came on and drew near unto Da'vid; and the man that bare the shield went before him.

42 And when the Phil'is-tine looked about, and saw Da'vid, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43 And the Phil'is-tine said unto Da'vid, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Phil'is-tine cursed Da'vid by his gods.

44 And the Phil'is-tine said to Da'vid, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45 Then said Da'vid to the Phil'is-tine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Is'ra-el, whom thou hast defied.

46 This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Phil'is-tines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Is'ra-el.

47 And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.

48 And it came to pass, when the Phil'is-tine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet Da'vid, that Da'vid hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Phil'is-tine.

49 And Da'vid put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Phil'is-tine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So Da'vid prevailed over the Phil'is-tine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Phil'is-tine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of Da'vid.

51 Therefore Da'vid ran, and stood upon the Phil'is-tine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Phil'is-tines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

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38 And Saul clad David with his apparel, and he put a helmet of brass upon his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail. 39 And David girded his sword upon his apparel, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. 40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his wallet; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. 42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and withal of a fair countenance. 43 And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the birds of the heavens, and to the beasts of the field. 45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin: but I come to thee in the name of Jehovah of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. 46 This day will Jehovah deliver thee into my hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from off thee; and I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day unto the birds of the heavens, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that Jehovah saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is Jehovah's, and he will give you into our hand. 48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. 51 Then David ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—If God be for us, who can be against us? Rom. 8:31.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**With God's help we can be constantly victorious.**

TOPIC.—**Faith demonstrated.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Goliath's challenge and David's acceptance. II. David's armor. III. Goliath's boast. IV. David's victory.**

TIME.—**B. C. 1063.**

PLACE.—**The place of the battle was in the valley of Elah, southwest of Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—The Philistines continued to

trouble Israel. We have no record to tell us the length of time that elapsed between the anointing of David and the combat between him and Goliath. It appears to have been a number of years. David had left the court of Saul and returned to Bethlehem to care for his father's sheep, and from the connection we find that Saul had forgotten David's family. The events which we study to-day give great encouragement to those who fear and trust God. The obstacles that seem to us insurmountable sink into insignificance when God undertakes for us.

COMMENTARY.—I. Goliath's challenge and David's acceptance (vs. 1-37). **1-11.** The armies of the Philistines and of the Israelites were facing each other in a narrow part of the valley of Elah. The crests of the hills are about a mile apart and five or six hundred feet high. One army occupied the highland on the north and the other the highland on the south. For one army to leave its place of defense and descend into the plain and ascend the hill on the other side would be to give the other army an advantage and invite defeat. Each army waited thus day after day hoping that the other would leave its place of security, but neither would do so. At last the Philistines challenged the Israelites to decide the struggle by single combat. They named Goliath as their champion, who offered to fight any one of Israel. It was probable that he was of the remnant of the Anakim, nearly all of whom Joshua destroyed, which remnant became identified with the Philistines. Goliath was from eight to ten feet in height. The cubit is the length of the forearm from the tip of the middle finger to the point of the elbow, hence varies so much that the cubit is said to be from sixteen to twenty-one inches. He wore metallic armor weighing from ninety to one hundred fifty pounds, and his spear weighed from twelve to eighteen pounds. He had a man to carry his shield before him to protect him.

12-37. David's three eldest brothers were in Saul's army and Jesse sent him from Bethlehem to the valley of Elah with food for them. When he saw Goliath's defiance of Israel and the true God, his courage arose and he declared that he was willing to meet the giant. His eldest brother would have David be quiet, but word came to Saul of David's offer and he sent for him. Saul doubted the ability of the youth to fight successfully against the experienced giant, but when David related his combat with a lion and a bear and expressed his faith in God, he consented to let him act as the champion of Israel.

II. David's armor (vs. 38-40). **38. Saul armed David with his armor**—"Saul clad David with his apparel."—*R. V.* It seemed to Saul that David should be properly clothed and protected if he was going into battle with such a powerful adversary as Goliath. **a helmet of brass**—In ancient warfare the vital parts of the body, and in many instances the entire body, were protected with armor that would resist the strokes of sword or spear. **coat of mail**—A garment consisting of small, overlapping sheets of metal to cover the upper part of the body. **39. girded his sword**—The sword was worn suspended from a belt. **assayed**—Attempted. **have not proved them**—David had had no experience in the use of such weapons as these, hence he distrusted his ability to use them successfully. **40. staff**—The shepherd's crook. **chose him five smooth stones**—Smooth stones would pass more easily through the air than rough, and would be more likely to hit the mark. **out of the brook**—Through the center of the valley ran a brook in a ravine, and there was an abundance of pebbles in the bed of the stream. **scrip**—A skin bag for carrying his belongings.

III. Goliath's boast (vs. 41-44). **41. the man that bare the shield**—Goliath, mighty in physical strength and clad with weighty metallic armor, advanced toward David accompanied by his shield-bearer. David was alone, a youth and with no weapon of defense. **42. disdained him**—Goliath felt insulted when an unarmored youth presented himself for combat against him. **a youth**—He may have been from twenty to twenty-five years of age. **ruddy**—Auburn-haired. **43. am I a dog**—It was customary for combatants before engaging in the fight to hurl abusive remarks at each other. Goliath's speech was full of venom, but David's was full of pious trust in the God of Israel. The giant considered the staff a fit instrument with which to punish that despised animal, the dog. **cursed David by his gods**—The gods of the Philistines were Dagon, Baal and Ashtoreth. Goliath called down upon David the curses of these gods. **44. I will give thy flesh**, etc.—The giant believed he could easily vanquish his adversary. He had no regard for God, in whose name David trusted. He was boastful, and it was only a few minutes until his boasting was shown to be vain.

IV. David's victory (vs. 45-54). **45. then said David**—It was not simply a contest of man with man, but of the true God with false gods. David expressed his firm reliance upon his God. **46. the Lord will deliver thee into mine hand**—Goliath boasted in himself, but David depended upon Jehovah. **that all the earth may know**—David was not considering his own exaltation from the expected victory, but had the honor of God in view. **47. the battle is the Lord's**—From a human standpoint the advantage was entirely in Goliath's favor. His helmet of brass, coat of mail, greaves and shield promised complete protection from any missile his youthful antagonist could hurl, but David looked higher than the natural. He believed God would interpose in his behalf. **48. David hasted**—He was eager to meet and defeat the foe of God and Israel. **49. smote the Philistine in his forehead**—The stone either struck an unprotected spot or pierced the giant's helmet. Some suppose that Goliath raised his head either in using his spear or in laughing in disdain at his antagonist, and thus exposed his forehead to the missile. David did his best in slinging the stone and trusting God, and God gave the victory. **50. no sword in the hand of David**—There was given him a sword when Saul put his armor upon him, but he had laid it aside for the weapon with which he was familiar, and which proved to be the one weapon with which he could successfully meet his great opponent. **51. Philistines....fled**—According to the arrangement previously made they were defeated, for Goliath, their champion, had been slain by the champion of the Israelites.

QUESTIONS.—What positions did the armies of Israel and the Philistines occupy in the opening of the lesson? What plan was offered for deciding who should be the victor? Describe Goliath and his armor. How long did Goliath defy Israel? Describe the coming of David to the camp of Israel. What offer did he make? What equipment did he have? What was the outcome of the combat? Why did David undertake the contest with Goliath?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The connection between the preceding lesson and this. 2. The Philistines were troublesome to Israel. 3. David had returned from Saul's court to the occupation of a shepherd. 4. David's capability and character. 5. The results of dependence upon God.

II. Theme.—Victory through divine aid.

III. The distress of Israel.—1. The Philistines. (1) Their country. (2) Their disposition. (3) Their stand against Israel in the valley of Elah. 2. The position of Israel's army. 3. Reason why the two armies refrained from battle. 4. The proposition to decide the conflict by single combat. 5. Goliath. (1) His nationality. (2) His size. (3) His armor. (4) Had a shield-bearer. (5) His oft-repeated challenge.

IV. The ways of Providence.—1. Jesse's three eldest sons in the army. 2. Soldiers provided their own sustenance. 3. Jesse's care to provide food for his sons. 4. David sent with provisions. 5. David's arrival and view of the situation. 6. The effect upon David of Goliath's defying the army of Israel.

V. Faith and victory.—1. The apparent lack of faith in Israel. 2. David's offer to meet the giant in mortal combat. 3. Eliab's opposition. 4. David sent for by Saul. 5. David's former exploits. 6. The attempt to wear Saul's armor. 7. David's selection of five smooth stones for use with his sling. 8. His firm reliance upon God. 9. Goliath's taunts. 10. David's pious and confident reply. 11. The well-directed pebble. 12. Goliath's defeat and Israel's triumph.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Faith demonstrated.**

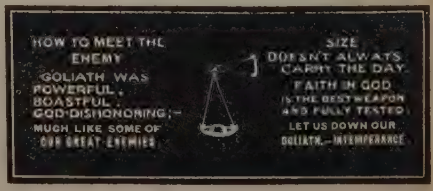
I. For the exaltation of divine power.
II. For the deliverance of Israel.

I. For the exaltation of divine power. Faith here stands alone in the person of David. Abject terror reigned throughout the entire army of Israel. The Philistines proposed to make the issue depend on a single combat between their champion and an Israelite warrior whom they might appoint to meet him. The impotence of Saul and his army without God, was thereby clearly and conclusively demonstrated. It was after that humiliating demonstration that the Lord brought into the field his own champion. During his retirement David received that divine preparation which should fit him for great achievements, especially the overthrow of the adversaries of Israel. David marveled at the dismay of Israel. To him it was an abhorrent thought that any one could dare to assert his strength against God. With all the sincerity of goodness and force of conviction he was not afraid to let it be known that he differed from others. Faith in God gave him at once the true point of view. He felt that the cause of the armies of Israel was the cause of the living God and that the Philistines were arrayed therefore against the power of God. That the power of God is adequate to any human need was the basis of David's reasoning. The proud challenge of Goliath fully justified David's burning indignation and patriotic zeal. There was cause to act and cause to speak when God's honor was outraged. David's sense of Goliath's sin increased in proportion as his faith in God expanded. While Israel thought of Goliath's strength, David thought of God's power. He had been living in communion with God, storing up spiritual strength, which he exhibited under circumstances which appalled the hearts of other men. There was settled within his soul a deep and holy confidence in the existence and absolute rule of the divine Being. His jealousy for the honor of the God of Israel was equal to his confidence in his ability to save. His one desire was to take away the reproach from Israel and to let all the world know that there was a God in Israel.

II. For the deliverance of Israel. Before David well knew to what he had committed himself, he found himself pledged to a deadly conflict with Goliath, the champion of idolaters. David felt the immeasurable difference between material force and moral force, between man at his proudest and God using his feeblest instrument. When the moment came for the conflict, David did not hesitate. He declared his faith to the giant that "the Lord saveth not with sword and spear." The issue proved that the Philistines laid the foundation of their own defeat when they deprived Israel of swords and spears and compelled them to try other means for the accomplishment of their deliverance. David's determination to fight only with the weapons with which he was familiar was a stroke of military genius, though his confidence rested mainly in the immutability of God, the divine worker. He who defied the armies of Israel had to reckon with the God of those armies. David was specially prepared, providentially led and inwardly impelled to the conflict. He felt the seriousness of the crisis, notwithstanding his bravery. He conquered the temptation to share in the general cowardice of the army before he conquered Goliath. Instead of being overcome by the rage of Eliab, David went on his course with the same glowing enthusiasm as before. A marvelous exhibition was given that day in the valley of Elah that those who are gentlest under provocation are strongest in the fight, and that meekness is really an attribute of might. In David simplicity and strength of heart appear throughout together with meekness, modest dignity, courage, humility and confidence. Though the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, he could recognize the workings of that Spirit and bid Godspeed to another in an exploit forbidden to himself. Goliath, representing mere human force, appeared with sword and shield, helmet and spear. David, representing faith, appeared with simple sling and stone, but in God's strength and in his name. The vauntings of the Philistines were silenced by the son of Jesse. David gained three victories in quick succession: first, over the spirit of anger in Eliab, second, over the precautions of unbelief in Israel, and third, over the proud blasphemer, Goliath. David's victories were victories for all Israel.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Use your own equipment (v. 39). The picture of the stripling David in the armor of Saul, head and shoulders above his fellows, is as ludicrous as senseless. There was no weakness in the armor; it was on the wrong man. We must be content to be as we are, and let God use us as we are. Confidence is always based upon certainties. David knew the skill of his arm, but he did not know the reliability of Saul's armor. To have the divine blessing upon our efforts, we must use what providence has placed within our reach and made us familiar with. A geologist heard of a builder's yard where an enormous heap of stones might be purchased. He bought the whole stock for a few dollars, and had the collection removed to his premises. From the heap he recovered many unique fossils and, to-day, several large museums and many small ones are enriched by collections worth in all a large sum. So, common weapons in the hand of a good man are often used by the Lord to achieve victory. Moses used the rod to which he had become accustomed as a shepherd. Shamgar used his ox-goad because he was familiar with it.

The modern Goliaths. Their name is legion. John Bunyan described Giant Despair, Giant Grim, Giant Pope and Giant Pagan. We have Giant Intemperance, Giant Lust and Giant Tobacco. Then, there are Giant Selfishness, Giant Covetousness and Giant Pride. Giants Profanity, Untruth, Envy and Slander, all belong to the same tribe. Brazen as they are in defiance, blatant as they are in expression, formidable as they seem in appearance, they are all vulnerable. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:4). God stands ready to give increased courage and power to those who humbly and trustingly take their stand against wrong.

The belated fighters (v. 52). Shakespeare made his character Falstaff to lie down on the battlefield when the battle was on; and, when it was over, he would carry back to camp a body that had been slain, and boast his courage. How many Falstaffs there are! Goliath stalks up and down. Saul hides in his tent. Eliab joins the tribe of critics. The young men say, "If we had the experience and training of the older men, we would fight him." The older men say, "If we had the strength and courage of youth, we would fight him." Then David comes. Faith in God is the battle-cry. A sling whistles through the air. Goliath pitches headlong. Now the camp of Israel suddenly swarms like a beehive. Saul from his tent, Eliab from his critic's corner, young men, old men, Falstaffs all, here they come to fight the battle already fought and won. The giants Lust, Intemperance, Pride, Envy, each and all stalk up and down the land. The Sauls hide in their tents and pray piously that divine power may sweep the iniquity from the land as with a besom of destruction. The Eliabs, who narrowly missed being anointed kings, skulk in the rear and tell what would have happened if they had been elected. At last some David engages the insulter of God and truth singlehanded. Then, just as soon as the issue is certain, history repeats itself, "And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines."

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—David trusted in the Lord and slew Goliath.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE



A giant enemy. Draw lines representing two hills on opposite sides of a valley through which flows a brook. Represent by lines the army of the Philistines on one hill and the army of Israel on the other. Tell the story of the two armies waiting there a long time. Neither one wished to begin a battle with the other. The Philistines were willing to let one man on their side fight with one man on Israel's side, and let the army whose champion should slay the champion of the other army be called victorious. In the Philistine army was a man named Goliath. Show the class that he was three or four feet taller than an ordinary sized man. Describe his helmet, his coat of mail, his spear and his shield.

Defying Israel. Draw a perpendicular line in the valley between the two armies to represent Goliath. He came down there each day and asked that some man from the camp of Israel should fight against him. Every one in the army was afraid of him, and no one offered to fight. Every day for forty days Goliath came out morning and evening and defied the army of Israel and in doing so defied the God of Israel.

David was brave. Tell the story of David's going from his home in Bethlehem to carry provisions to his three oldest brothers in the army. Note the fact that he had already been anointed king, but he was still at home caring for his father's sheep when he was sent to the army. As he came to where his brothers were, he saw Goliath and heard what he said about fighting the champion of Israel. David was too brave and too devoted to God to allow the giant to talk that way without saying something, and he offered to fight Goliath. Tell how Eliab talked to David and how word came to Saul. It was because David trusted in God that he dared to meet the champion of the Philistines.

Slaying the giant. Describe Saul's attempt to put his armor upon David, and then describe the weapons David had. Draw a perpendicular line in the valley to represent the youth David. David had skill in the use of the sling. The giant was well protected, but the Lord helped David to aim so accurately that the stone from his sling struck the blow which caused the giant's death. Describe the result of this combat. The Philistines were so confused that they left their tents and fled toward their country, pursued by the Israelites. The army of Israel took much spoil from their enemy. Call attention to some of the giants that are enemies to children. There are the giants of Bad Language, Bad Company, Lying, Stealing, Cheating, Disobedience and Sabbath-breaking. All these can be overcome through obedience to God and trust in him.

LESSON V

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Apr. 26.—Saul tries to kill David.—1 Sam. 19: 1-12. Tu.—David's flight.—1 Sam. 21: 1-9. Wed.—Priests at Nob slain.—1 Sam. 22: 6-19. Th.—Flight from Keilah.—1 Sam. 23: 1-14. Fr.—Saul pursues David.—1 Sam. 23: 15-26. Sat.—Brotherly love.—1 John 3: 1-12. Su.—Love and hatred.—1 John 3: 13-24.

Saul Tries to Kill David.—1 Samuel 19: 1-24. Print 19: 1-12.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 4, 5)

SUPT.—1 And Saul spake to Jon'a-than his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill Da'vid.

School.—2 But Jon'a-than Saul's son delighted much in Da'vid: and Jon'a-than told Da'vid, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself:

3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee.

4 And Jon'a-than spake good of Da'vid unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against Da'vid; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good:

5 For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Phil'-is-tine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Is'-ra-el: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay Da'vid without a cause?

6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jon'a-than: and Saul sware, As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain.

7 And Jon'a-than called Da'vid, and Jon'a-than shewed him all those things. And Jon'a-than brought Da'vid to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

8 And there was war again: and Da'vid went out, and fought with the Phil'is-tines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him.

9 And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and Da'vid played with his hand.

10 And Saul sought to smite Da'vid even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and Da'vid fled, and escaped that night.

11 Saul also sent messengers unto Da'vid's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Mi'chal Da'vid's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain.

12 So Mi'chal let Da'vid down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should slay David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David. 2 And Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to slay thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself in the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself: 3 and I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and if I see aught, I will tell thee. 4 And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good: 5 for he put his life in his hand, and smote the Philistine, and Jehovah wrought a great victory for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice; wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause? 6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As Jehovah liveth, he shall not be put to death. 7 And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as beforetime.

8 And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled before him. 9 And an evil spirit from Jehovah was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand; and David was playing with his hand. 10 And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the spear; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the spear into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night. 11 And Saul sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou wilt be slain. 12 So Michal let David down through the window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe. Prov. 29: 25.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**God's protection is over the righteous.**

TOPIC.—**Attempted violence.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Jonathan's care for David. II. David's escape from Saul. III. Saul prophesying.**

TIME.—**B. C. 1062.**

PLACES.—**Gibeah; Ramah.**

INTRODUCTION.—David's triumph over Goliath resulted in a disastrous defeat for the Philistines and brought corresponding relief to the Israelites. To David it brought the thanks and honor of Israel. He became greatly beloved by the nation and the people were not slow in expressing their high regard for him. The praises of his exploits, sung by the people, aroused Saul's jealousy to the extent that he desired to take his life. Saul gave him his daughter Michal to be his wife, but only that he might be able to bring about his death. As a condition upon which David might have her, he asked that he accomplish the death of a hundred Philistines, hoping that he, in fulfilling this condition, would be slain. David more than met this condition. David was passing through experiences that would prepare him to rule Israel justly and wisely. God was with him and even Saul recognized this fact.

COMMENTARY.—I. JONATHAN'S CARE FOR DAVID (vs. 1-7). 1. that they should kill David—It was in one of his insane fits of jealousy that Saul gave this murderous order. David continued to play on the harp before him to quiet him, but his efforts were not always successful. The records do not show that there was any

fresh cause for Saul's anger. **2. Jonathan told David**—David had a warm friend in the king's court in the person of Jonathan whose soul was knit with the soul of David (ch. 18:1). The two had made a covenant of friendship and Jonathan showed himself a true friend to David as long as he lived. He took the part of David rather than that of his insanely jealous father. **hide thyself**—Since Saul had given orders to his servants as well as to Jonathan to take David's life it was very necessary that David take the best possible precautions to protect himself. **3. in the field where thou art**—Jonathan was standing between his father and David. It would seem that he wished David to know exactly what Saul's mind was regarding him, therefore he requested him to hide in such a place that he could quickly report to him what Saul said. **I will commune with my father of thee**—Jonathan was willing to draw out his father in conversation and to plead for his friend.

4. Jonathan spoke good of David—Had Jonathan simply advised David to flee without endeavoring to bring Saul to a better mind, he would have acted to the prejudice of his father's interests, by depriving him of the best support of his kingdom.—*Cam. Bib.* What follows reveals the wisdom of Jonathan and his sense of justice. **let not the king sin against....David**—The course Saul was taking with reference to David was most unjust, and Jonathan was ready both to recognize respectfully his father's kingship and to point out the wickedness of his actions toward David. This meant much, since Saul was his father and was also king. **hath not sinned against thee**—David had constantly worked for the interests of the nation, and in doing so had worked for the best interests of the king. **to thee-ward**—Toward thee. **5. put his life in his hand**—David risked his life, as he went out against Goliath. He did it out of devotion to his country and his God. He did what no man in all the army of Israel was willing to do. **the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel**—David went forth in the name of the Lord against the Philistines' champion and the Lord gave Israel the victory as a result. Jonathan devoutly ascribed to God the honor for it. **didst rejoice**—It was well for Saul to be reminded of what had been done and of how he had felt about the work David did. **innocent blood**—In taking the life of David he would be shedding innocent blood.

6. Saul hearkened—The plea of Jonathan was effectual. He had appealed to reason, to justice and to experience. Jonathan was a noble man, and deserved to be heard. **as the Lord liveth**—A form of expression used to render a statement emphatic. **he shall not be slain**—Thus quickly was Saul's mind changed, but it was not permanently fixed. This shows his impulsiveness, which no doubt became greater on account of his malady. **7. shewed him all those things**—David's relief must have been great when he learned of Saul's changed attitude toward him; yet he must have realized that his attitude might change as suddenly again. **he was in his presence, as in times past**—He was Israel's great military leader, yet he employed his skill in music for Saul's sake.

II. DAVID'S ESCAPE FROM SAUL (vs. 8-17). **8. there was war again**—The Philistines had not been permanently subdued. **David went out**—His success in this campaign was great. He performed a most important service for Saul and **his kingdom. 9. evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul**—The Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from Saul because of his disobedience to God's commands, and the Lord permitted an evil spirit to take possession of him at times. The spirit of jealousy returned and he was beside himself. **as he sat,** etc.—Saul, as usual, had his spear in his hand, and David was playing upon his harp in an effort to soothe the enraged king. **10. Saul sought to smite David**—No promise that he had made was remembered when this new fit of anger gained control of the king. **escaped that night**—Fled from the king's presence and first sought refuge in his own house. To some it seems strange that David did not effect his escape altogether from Saul after his former attempt to smite him (ch. 18:11); but doubtless David regarded Saul's former attack as an outburst of his madness, not flowing from any deep-seated design against his life. But now, after the startling revelations which Jonathan had made to him of Saul's deadly purpose, he feels that his life is no longer safe in the royal court. —*Whedon.*

11. sent messengers unto David's house—At this time Saul's purpose seems to have been firm to cause the death of David. As David had at first fled to his house, Saul hoped to have him caught there. He expected his men would guard the house to prevent David's escape. They were to take him in the morning while he was not suspecting an attack and not on his guard. **Michal David's wife**—She was Saul's daughter. She warned David against her father's efforts to slay him. She doubtless knew Saul's disposition better than David did. "Psalm 59 is referred by its title to the present occasion. If this is correct, the psalm supplements the history, showing that David was in danger not from Saul only, but from ruffians among Saul's followers who prowled about the streets of Gibeah threatening his life."—*Cam. Bib.* **12. through a window**—The spies escaped from Jericho through a window (Josh. 2:15), and Paul once made his escape from his enemies by being let down from a window. If David's house was on the city wall, the escape was not difficult, for the guard would likely be watching at the door of his house. **13-17.** Michal took an image she had in the house and put it in David's bed and with a goat's hair pillow made a representation of a man. She did this to deceive Saul's men and give David time to make good his escape. She also employed falsehood to explain to her father her course in allowing David to escape. We can not approve of her deception and falsehood.

III. SAUL PROPHESYING (vs. 18-24). David fled to Ramah, the home of Samuel, and told Samuel what Saul had done. He remained with Samuel in the school of the prophets. Saul heard of it and sent men to take David, and as they came near the school of the prophets, they began to prophesy. Saul sent the second time and the third time with the same results, then he went himself, and as he drew near he also began to prophesy. God would call Saul's attention to his wicked course.

QUESTIONS.—Who was Jonathan? What was his attitude toward David? How did Jonathan bring his father to feel friendly toward David? What success did David have in his war with the Philistines? What attempt did Saul make to slay David? How did David escape? Who was Michal? Where did David go from Gibeah? With whom did he live? What came to those whom Saul sent to take David?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The effects of David's victory over Goliath. (1) The Philistines were utterly routed. (2) Honors were heaped upon David. 2. The mutual love of David and Jonathan. 3. David's subsequent victories over the Philistines. 4. Saul's jealousy. 5. Saul's attempt to take David's life (ch. 18: 11). 6. Saul's daughter became David's wife.

II. Theme.—A testing-time for David.

III. Jonathan's plea for David.—1. Saul's orders to his servants and to Jonathan to kill David. 2. The report of this command brought to David. 3. The plan to learn Saul's real intention. 4. Jonathan's declaration respecting David's goodness. 5. Reference to David's victory over Goliath and Israel's salvation. 6. Saul reminded of his recent gratitude to David. 7. David's innocence recognized. 8. Saul's attention to Jonathan's address. 9. Saul's decree that David should not be slain.

IV. Saul's attempt on David's life.—1. David was Israel's military leader. 2. His victories over the Philistines. 3. Saul's second attempt to take David's life. (1) The evil spirit's possession of Saul. (2) David was playing the harp for Saul's relief. (3) The javelin hurled at David. 4. The inconsistency of Saul's actions.

V. David's preservation.—1. Escaped the javelin by slipping away. 2. Messengers sent by Saul to David's house. 3. Michal's warning to David. 4. Michal's scheme to aid David to escape. 5. David's visit to Samuel at Ramah. 6. The messengers sent to find David became prophets. 7. David preserved and prepared for the kingdom.

Practical Survey

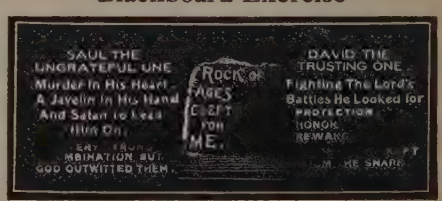
Topic.—**Attempted violence.**

I. Disclosed Saul's secret plot.
II. Defeated by divine intervention.

I. Disclosed Saul's secret plot. In tracing Saul in his progress to final ruin and David in his accession to the throne we have here brought out the aroused hostility of Saul on the one side and the services of Jonathan's friendship on the other. Father and son were at cross purposes concerning the life of one who in the providence of God was to supplant them both. In the progress of the conflict between enmity and friendship there was a revelation of the individual characteristics of the two men and the principles which actuated them. The ruling passion of Saul's inner life became his acknowledged master, so that murder in intent became murder avowed. He raised in Jonathan's mind the conflict between worldly, personal interests and his fidelity of friendship. It was a deep grief to Jonathan to witness the downfall of his father in character, but to be called upon to be partaker of his sin was beyond all else. In yearning desire to save his father from continued crime and in fervent hope to spare the life of God's chosen one, Jonathan conversed in a kindly manner with his father, citing David's heroism in behalf of Israel and God's evident approval of him. He recalled Saul's own admiration for David, then asked if he could inflict death upon him. Jonathan's prudent and persuasive intercession softened the king's obduracy, so that he made a most solemn profession of reconciliation and David "was in his presence as in times past." The change wrought was but superficial, for Saul's nature was alienated from God.

II. Defeated by divine intervention. The path marked out for David was dark and dangerous, but God watched over, led and defended him. Things permitted were to test, strengthen and perfect his character, however strange such providence may have seemed to David. Though Saul had made him his son-in-law it was in the exercise of his low cunning that Michal might become a snare to him. In this he was also defeated. Michal's quick wit devised the means of escape for David, deceived the messengers of Saul and invented a ready story to disarm her father's wrath. Her fear of her father was greater than her love for truth. Her love for her husband was greater than her hatred for sin. David sought Samuel whose home was the center of spiritual influence. Life at Saul's court was out of accord with his most cherished aspirations. He was conscious of being misunderstood and misrepresented. The earlier days of quiet service and holy communion with God were but sweet memories, bringing the bitter realities of daily life into stronger relief. What wonder that with bounding heart and rapid flight he sought consolation, counsel and rest with the honored man who once anointed him to some unexplained service. While battles were being fought and the kingdom was troubled with the unsatisfactory condition of the court, Samuel was quietly gathering around himself a band of men who were becoming a power to influence the national life in days to come. Saul's wicked desperation was great when he sent to Naioth to capture David. It reached its highest pitch when, after three attempts to take him, he ventured to go himself to the abode of Samuel. It was after long separation that Saul thus drew near to the revered man of God and the company of prophets, the only occasion on which Samuel, David and Saul were present at the same time and place. To protect David from Saul's messengers and to afford a sign of God's opposition to Saul's designs, the messengers were restrained from carrying out their orders. The divine power was exercised, first upon Saul's men and then upon himself. As each band saw the venerated Samuel stand at the head of the prophets, they feared to do violence to one under such august protection. Hitherto Saul appeared to be fighting solely against David, but when the spirit of prophecy came upon his messengers and rendered them helpless, it was obvious that he was fighting against God. Such knowledge added to his mental confusion though not sufficiently to subdue his wild passion. His bodily manifestations were not marks of grace, but indicated a moral state at variance with the Spirit of God. The experience served to change a persecuting monarch into a harmless enthusiast. T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The cruelty of jealousy. "Jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame" (S. S. 8:6). 1. Jealousy denies justice to others. Because the singers of Israel said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (ch. 18:7), Saul would fain have robbed David of his greater glory. Napoleon deliberately detracted from the merits of his bravest marshals lest their glory should excel his own. 2. Jealousy is the extreme of selfishness. It is said that Oliver Goldsmith would fume and fret and make himself disagreeable when he fancied the attentions of a company were lavished on Dr. Johnson more than on himself. "Gustave Dore never heard of any other artist's success without brooding over it jealously and unhappily." 3. Jealousy is the mother of murder. Jealousy murdered Abel and directed the javelin thrust at David. Cambyses, king of Persia, slew his brother because the latter could draw a stronger bow than himself. Caligula, the Roman Emperor, put his brother to death because he was strikingly handsome. "For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance" (Prov. 6:34). The evils that have followed in the trail of jealousy are not few nor small.

The harp and the javelin. "And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand" (v. 9). The harp versus the javelin. Music versus discord. The tower of Babel resulted in the confusion of every tongue but one—Music. It is the universal language. In the dawn of time we read that the morning stars sang together. In the beginning of the race Jubal was "father of all such as handle the harp and organ" (Gen. 4:21). And ever since, the world has had its sorrow lessened, its burdens lightened and its pain softened by the power of music. It is said that during the Civil War, on the days when the regimental bands played near the hospitals, the sick and wounded revived, while men who were so lame they could not walk before got up and went out into the sunshine. But over against David's harp was Saul's javelin. Over against the song of the morning stars were the fiery darts of hell. Over against Jubal's harp and organ was Cain's fratricidal hand. For every harpist who is sending out the soft notes of a holy life, there is some javelin-thrower hurling innuendos and slander. I listened to a spirited debate in Minneapolis during the last General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church over a proposed amendment providing for the trial of bishops whenever there were general rumors affecting their character. Finally Dr. J. M. Buckley took the floor, and, in his characteristic way, said, "Rumors! Rumors! I can destroy the character of any man on this floor by rumors." The matter was brought to a vote at once and the offending part stricken out. Javelins of sarcastic wit, javelins of bitter irony, javelins of slander, javelins of cruel suspicions are flying here and there, jabbing character, stinging sensitive natures and murdering peace. Why not have more hands playing harps and fewer hands hurling javelins? And the beautiful thing about it is, that David did not return the javelin. He let it lie where it fell and went his way. Can you do as well? "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil" (Matt. 5:39). G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The Lord preserves his servants.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

David was patient
Saul was wicked
Jonathan was kind

David was patient. Can the class tell where David's boyhood home was? Some of the children may be able to tell about a visit Samuel made to Bethlehem at the home of Jesse to anoint some one to be king of Israel. Let them tell of seven sons of Jesse who passed before the prophet, and no one of them was chosen by the Lord. Let them tell about David's being called in. He had been attending to his father's sheep. He was called from the care of sheep to be anointed king of Israel. Give them an opportunity to tell what wild animals David attacked and slew while caring for sheep. Let two or three in the class give the story of David and Goliath. David loved his people enough to make a strong effort to conquer their foe. The giant was large, strong and well armed. David was much smaller and had only his shepherd's staff and a sling and stones, but he trusted in the Lord. Note that David led Israel's army and gained victories over the Philistines. He was not proud nor did he become lifted up, but he kept humble and patient when Saul was cruel toward him. He did nothing unkind to Saul.

Saul was wicked. Recall Saul's anointing as king and note how modest he was and how the Holy Spirit came on him and he was changed into another man. There were steps in his downward course. He disobeyed the Lord in the matter of offering sacrifices when he should have waited for Samuel to come. He disobeyed again in sparing King Agag and the best of the flocks and herds. He became jealous of David, then he sought to commit murder. The Holy Spirit left Saul because Saul would not do right. When the Holy Spirit left him, an evil spirit came in and made him much trouble. One sin leads to another. This is an important lesson. It is dangerous to take even one step in the wrong direction. While Saul was humble the Lord blessed him and the people loved him. When he became haughty, the Spirit left him and the people lost their love for him. How do the children like to see a boy or girl who is proud and haughty?

Jonathan was kind. Tell the story of Jonathan and David who pledged their friendship to each other. Jonathan could see that David was humble, brave, kind and good, even if his father took a strong dislike to him. Give the story of the plea that Jonathan made to his father in David's behalf. This resulted in David's return to the court of Saul. After this David went to war against the Philistines and conquered them. Again Saul sought to slay him, but he escaped and went to Samuel. Jonathan was a faithful and valuable friend to David. A good friend is highly esteemed. Happy are they who have such friends as David had.

LESSON VI

HOME READINGS.—Mon., May 3.—Friendship of David and Jonathan.—1 Sam. 20: 32-42. Tu.—A friend at court.—1 Sam. 18: 1-16. Wed.—A covenant of friendship.—1 Sam. 20: 1-11. Th.—Service of friendship.—1 Sam. 20: 12-23. Fr.—Test of friendship.—1 Sam. 20: 24-31. Sat.—Recognition of friendship.—2 Sam. 9: 1-13. Su.—Expression of friendship.—2 Sam. 1: 17-27.

Friendship of David and Jonathan.—1 Samuel 20: 1-42. Print 20: 32-42.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verse, 42)

SUPT.—32 And Jon'a-than answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?

School.—33 And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jon'a-than knew that it was determined of his father to slay Da'vid.

34 So Jon'a-than arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for Da'vid, because his father had done him shame.

35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jon'a-than went out into the field at the time appointed with Da'vid, and a little lad with him.

36 And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jon'a-than had shot, Jon'a-than cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee?

38 And Jon'a-than cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jon'a-than's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

39 But the lad knew not any thing: only Jon'a-than and Da'vid knew the matter.

40 And Jon'a-than gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city.

41 And as soon as the lad was gone, Da'vid arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until Da'vid exceeded.

42 And Jon'a-than said to Da'vid, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jon'a-than went into the city.

*AMERICAN REVISION

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore should he be put to death? what hath he done? 33 And Saul cast his spear at him to smite him; whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to put David to death. 34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no food the second day of the month; for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. 36 And he said unto his lad, Run, find now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee? 38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. 39 But the lad knew not anything: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. 40 And Jonathan gave his weapons unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city. 41 And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the South, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded. 42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of Jehovah, saying, Jehovah shall be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed, for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—A friend loveth at all times. Prov. 17: 17.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The truest friendship has a religious basis.**

TOPIC.—**True friendship.**

OUTLINE.—**I. The covenant. II. Jonathan's fruitless plea. III. The loving farewell.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1062.**

PLACE.—Gibeah, where Saul had his royal palace.

INTRODUCTION.—The relation existing between David and Jonathan presents a marvelous exhibition of human friendship. The two young men were, in an important sense, rivals. Jonathan would be the natural successor of his father to the throne of Israel, while David was the man whom God designed to place in that position. They belonged to different tribes of Israel, David being of the tribe of Judah and Jonathan of Benjamin. Saul's ill feeling toward David would naturally tend to prejudice Jonathan, his son, toward him. These considerations, however, had no weight. The two young men were drawn toward each other by an attraction so strong that nothing but death could separate them. The facts concerning their friendship are set forth in 1 Sam. 18: 1-4; 19: 1-7; 20: 1-42; 23: 16-18; 2 Sam. 1: 17-27.

COMMENTARY.—I. THE COVENANT (vs. 1-23). 1-10. David had fled from Saul to Samuel at Ramah and was there in the school of the prophets. Saul had learned where he was, and had pursued him. David fully realized his danger, and returned to Gibeah and sought an interview with his trusted friend, Jonathan. He asked him what he had done that Saul should seek to slay him. Jonathan assured David that his father would take no step without letting him know about it, and he would report to him any designs his father might have against him. David was aware that Saul knew of Jonathan's friendship for him and saw in that fact a reason why he would not reveal to Jonathan his plans to cause David's death. David gave utterance to the memorable words, "There is but a step between me and death" (v. 3). Jonathan was ready to do for David whatever he desired, and when David planned a test to determine Saul's present attitude toward him, he readily consented to do his part. The new moon, or the beginning of the month, was an occasion for offering sacrifices to God. It had become a season of feasting in the king's court, and all

the chief officers of the king were expected to be present. David would not expose himself to death by being present, so he planned to absent himself, and have a report brought to him as to how the king felt toward him.

11-23. Jonathan and David went into the field and consulted how information concerning Saul might be given by Jonathan to David secretly. Jonathan pledged to David that, when he had sounded his father, he would inform him whether his attitude was friendly or hostile. Jonathan seems to have known that David would succeed Saul as king, and he therefore asked a pledge from David to show kindness to him and his house forever. It was customary for a king upon ascending the throne to slay all who might have any apparent right to reign. David gave his word, as Jonathan requested, and his subsequent history shows that he remembered the covenant and kept it. Jonathan's love for David is emphatically expressed in, "He loved him as he loved his own soul" (v. 17).

II. Jonathan's fruitless plea (vs. 24-34). **24-31.** David hid himself in the field, according to the plan agreed upon between himself and Jonathan, absenting himself from the feast in the royal court. On the first day Saul observed that his seat was vacant, but thought David's absence was because he was not ceremonially clean. His absence on the second day called forth an inquiry and he asked Jonathan for an explanation. Jonathan told him that David had asked permission to attend a family feast at Bethlehem, and he had granted it. This led Saul to make unkind charges against his son. He reproached him with being the son of a "perverse rebellious woman" (v. 30). "To any Oriental nothing is so grievously insulting as a reproach cast upon his mother: The mother herself is not held to be affronted in such cases, but the son who hears such words applied to her is insulted, and meant to be insulted beyond expiation."—*Kitto.* Saul charged Jonathan with being in league with David. Then he appealed to Jonathan's ambition, declaring that as long as David lived there would be no hope of his occupying the throne of Israel, and commanded him to have David brought to him that he might be put to death.

32. wherefore shall he be slain—Although Jonathan saw that his father was angry both at him and at David, he undertook the defense of his friend. **what hath he done**—Jonathan asked Saul a question that he could not answer and be consistent with his determination to kill David. David had been the means of preserving the kingdom of Israel. More than once he had defeated the Philistines. He had constantly acted in the highest interests of his nation. He had not been discourteous to the king, even under the greatest provocation. He had shown himself to be brave, large-hearted and highly intelligent. It was now more than a mere fit of madness with Saul; there had come to be a settled purpose to slay David. **33. Saul cast a javelin at him**—The king could not answer his son's question, and his only reply was to hurl at him the javelin that was always within easy reach. **Jonathan knew**—The fact that Saul would kill his own son for being a friend to David was enough to convince Jonathan that David's life was in serious jeopardy. Saul's unfitness to rule was evident from his course toward David, even overlooking his past misdeeds. He was more concerned to have vengeance upon one of whom he was jealous than to have righteousness prevail in his kingdom. **34. in fierce anger**—Jonathan had been deeply insulted by his father, but he was overlooking that and giving attention to Saul's disposition toward his friend David. "We should probably understand this rather of Jonathan's grief than of his anger, the latter clause explaining the former; for he was grieved for David. He was grieved for his father; he was grieved for his friend."—*Clarke.* **because his father had done him shame**—Saul had wronged David publicly by speaking as if he might be plotting to gain the kingdom for himself. He was greatly injuring David's reputation or he was, at least, taking a course to weaken David's influence.

III. The loving farewell (vs. 35-42). **35. in the morning**—In the morning after the second day of the feast from which David had absented himself. **at the time appointed with David**—It was a time to which David had looked forward with intense interest, for he was to learn Saul's mind regarding him. **a little lad was with him**—To bring back the arrows he was to shoot. **36. he shot....beyond him**—It was understood between David and Jonathan that if Jonathan should shoot the arrows beyond where David was, that Saul's mind was hostile toward him. The lad would know nothing of the purpose of the shooting, but David would understand. **37. Jonathan cried after the lad**—If David did not see the course of the arrow, his friend's call to the lad, "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" would give him the signal agreed upon; and if he had seen it, the knowledge sought would be twice given. **38. make speed, haste, stay not**—Jonathan sent this cry after the lad, but it was really directed to David. The lad suspected nothing, but caught the full import of the words. **39. Jonathan and David knew**—The signal had been agreed upon previously. **40. artillery**—His bow, arrows and quiver. This word was used of weapons thrown or hurled, even before gunpowder came into use. **carry them to the city**—Jonathan sent the boy away that he might be alone with David.

41. fell on his face to the ground—David showed his respect to Jonathan as to a superior in Oriental style by falling upon his knees and touching his forehead to the ground. **three times**—David was deeply grateful to Jonathan for his interest in him and thus expressed his gratitude and obligation. **David exceeded**—David was more deeply moved than Jonathan. His weeping was more abundant than that of his friend. **42. go in peace**—Jonathan had made it possible for David to escape with his life. **we have sworn both of us**—David and Jonathan had sworn to each other to be friends and to have regard for each other's families. **the Lord be between me and thee**—We may well believe that when, in after years, David drew to his court the posterity of Jonathan, he often told them himself of these last events before their separation.—*Ewald.*

QUESTIONS.—To what place did David go from Naioth? To what friend did David tell his grief? In what way did Jonathan show his friendship for David? What plan was made to find out Saul's attitude toward David? How did Saul feel toward Jonathan? How did Jonathan let David know how Saul felt toward him? What covenant did Jonathan and David make? What was the basis of the friendship existing between them?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. Previous references to the friendship of David and Jonathan. 1 Sam. 18:1-4; 19:1-7. 2. Later references to their friendship. 1 Sam. 23:16-18; 2 Sam. 1:17-27. 3. Circumstances unfavorable to a close friendship between David and Jonathan. 4. Jonathan was brave, generous, self-forgetful. 5. David was large-hearted, refined, devoted to God. 6. The value of friendship.

II. Theme.—True friendship.

III. In need of a friend.—1. The position occupied by David. (1) Had been anointed for kingship. (2) Through his exploit in defeating Goliath he had become loved by the nation. (3) Had a place in the king's court. (4) Had become indispensable to Israel's welfare. (5) Saul's attacks upon David. 2. The feelings of one wrongfully accused. 3. David was a fugitive from Saul. 4. Saul's anger had been fitful, and David did not know whether or not he felt well-disposed toward him. 5. His duties were at Saul's court. 6. He needed a friend to stand between him and the king.

IV. Jonathan, David's friend.—1. David's confidence in Jonathan led him to go to him for counsel. 2. The assurance Jonathan gave David of safety, when to David it seemed that there was but a step between him and death. 3. Jonathan dared to forfeit the king's favor to befriend David. 4. David found a friend in the king's family. 5. We have a Friend in the court of heaven. 6. The depth of the affection existing between David and Jonathan.

V. Helpfulness from friendship.—1. David secured the information and advice he needed from Jonathan. 2. Jonathan showed kindness to David and David later showed kindness to Jonathan's posterity. 3. True friendship, such as David and Jonathan had for each other, survives misrepresentation and adversity.

Practical Survey

Topic.—True friendship.

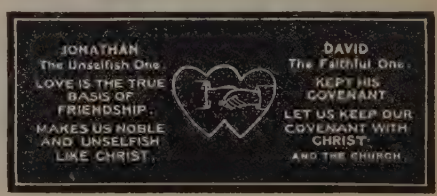
I. Began in covenant with God.
II. Constant amid life's perils.

I. Began in covenant with God. David became aware that Saul's attempts on his life were not to be ascribed to fitful outbursts of madness, but to a fixed purpose and for reasons he could not fathom. Saul was sullen and morose, charged to the full with envy and malice, ready for deeds of blood, yet fearful of a doom of which he dared not speak. A crisis had come in David's life which demanded prompt action. While in conflict with Goliath and amid the regular duties of public service, David had no fear for his life or reputation, but when he suspected secret attempts on his life and character, he felt bound to devise means of securing himself and rightly manifested much anxiety and resolution. Jonathan appears to have been authority with his father in all matters pertaining to the court and government, and yet it was a very difficult matter to find out Saul's mind. It involved no little risk to Jonathan. Saul's spirit and conduct were evidence that all efforts to bring him to a right attitude were in vain. Saul assumed that policy and prudence would regulate the succession to the throne. Jonathan's love for David and spiritual insight enabled him to see through the fallacy and to make his choice. He was proof against unholy parental influence; against material consideration delusively presented and even threatened death. The manner in which he performed his part is a beautiful instance of wise and faithful friendship under most perilous circumstances. He dared to let the court know his preference for the spiritual over the material. That was heroism which required more courage than to go amid their cheers to the cannon's mouth. To Saul's selfish heart this nobleness of love and self-forgetfulness seemed nothing but self-will and sheer madness. Hatred had become the pervading spirit of Saul's life and it gave a coloring to everything. At the very beginning of the dark valley of trial through which David had to pass in consequence of Saul's jealousy, he was blessed with Jonathan's friendship. They entered into covenant in the name of Jehovah.

II. Constant amid life's perils. Jonathan's love for David began in the midst of his newborn popularity, but it lasted all through his reverses. While Jonathan was always faithful to David he was never false to his father. His conduct was most exemplary, eminently practical, and wholly unselfish. He had espoused the cause of right against might. The spontaneity and heartiness with which he laid aside all prospects of power and distinction and his rights to the throne, finding joy and satisfaction in the coming supremacy of David, proved his friendship to be of an eminently holy character. He carried in his heart a tender secret, that of being bound by holy bonds to the interests of a coming king. To befriend David was to displease Saul, yet there was no faltering in Jonathan's fidelity. He was indignant against injury and wickedness. He pleaded for right and innocence. He was indignant at the base insinuations against the noblest and purest of men. Being able to surrender his own prospects, he could strengthen the faith of his friend, when pressed almost beyond endurance, and weary with continued flight. He considered the loneliness and oppressed state of David. He had come into great peril in the service of God. David's description of his own condition was that there was but a step between him and death. Through the office of friendship God mercifully provided for his safety against an enraged and envious king. It was Jonathan who brought a delightful oasis in this wilderness history. The separation between David and Jonathan was one of the painful trials of life, yet they had an inalienable possession in their mutual affection, a strong and an habitual inclination to promote the good and happiness of each other. While the arrows of Jonathan indicated danger and that separation would be for the welfare of both and the further interests of the kingdom, they reminded David that a strong and noble friend was standing in the breach.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Jonathan was an unselfish friend. Jonathan was a noted warrior. Lesson twelve of the first quarter gave an account of his brave deed in scaling the rocks and putting to flight the whole army of the Philistines. In addition, he was the king's son and entitled to all the honor that the position carried. But David came as a mere stripling, defeated Goliath, delivered the nation and is proclaimed everywhere as a hero. As Jonathan stands by while David is interrogated by Saul, "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (ch. 18:1). No trace of jealousy, no evidence of that envy which so often appears when others are honored before us, but a friendship which always expresses itself by sacrifice for, and interest in, its object.

Jonathan was a loving friend. In the first impulsive expression of his love for David he "stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle" (ch. 18:3). Love gladly, freely gives all.

Jonathan was a faithful friend. His loyalty never faltered. When David was an outcast, Jonathan was his friend. When David was in danger, Jonathan warned him. When Saul's wrath flamed out in sudden fury because of his defense of David and the javelin was hurled at him by his own father, Jonathan's loyalty remained unshaken. Aristotle said, "The friendship of most men in these days is like some plants in the water, which have broad leaves on the surface of the water, but scarce any root at all; like lemons, cold within, hot without; full expressions, empty intentions; speak loud, do little; like drums and trumpets and ensigns in battle, which make a noise and a show, but act nothing; mere friendships in pretense and compliment, that can bow handsomely, and promise emphatically, and speak plausibly, and forget all." Still there are some who, like Jonathan, conform to the character described by Solomon as follows: "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

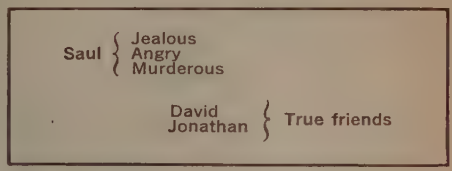
The best friend. "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24). What Jonathan was to David, Jesus is to us, and more. What are the gifts Jonathan gave to David compared to the gifts of love and grace that Christ gives to us? What are the loyalty and faithfulness of Jonathan compared to the faithfulness of Christ? And what is the measure of our loyalty to our Friend? Did he not say, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you"? (John 15:14). Two courtiers belonging to the court of the emperor Constantine, strolled into some gardens, and entering a house which happened to belong to a Christian, were attracted by a manuscript life of the hermit Anthony. As pastime, one of them began to read it; but his curiosity soon grew into a deep conviction, which made him cry out to his friend, "What attainment do we propose to ourselves so great as to be the intimate friends of the emperor? and even when arrived at, how unstable and full of peril is the position? But here, if I wish to be the friend of God, he will receive me immediately." Augustine, who gives this incident, says that then and there the two courtiers gave themselves to the Lord.

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—A true friend is of great value.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE



Saul. How much do the children recall of the life of Saul? Even though it has been reviewed in previous lessons it is well to recall some of the events in his life. The Lord directed his course, when he was seeking his father's asses, so that he would meet the prophet Samuel, who anointed him with oil for the kingship of Israel. Saul was tall and good-looking, just the kind of man the people desired for a king. Note that he at first was humble and God was with him. He was able then to defeat the enemies of Israel. We have already observed that Saul disobeyed the Lord in one thing and then in another, until he became haughty and the Spirit of the Lord left him. The right thing for children, as well as grown people, to do, is to give themselves to God for his service. Can the class tell why the Lord had Samuel anoint David to be king of Israel? Note that it was because Saul failed to follow the Lord. It is unwise and unsafe for any one to disobey God. Describe the attacks that Saul made upon David. He was jealous because the people loved and honored David. He was jealous also because he thought David was about to become king in his place. He had fits of anger when he was anxious to slay David.

David needed a friend. Recall the flight of David from Gibeah, where Saul lived, to Ramah to see Samuel. David was a high officer in Saul's court and had done great things for Israel, but now he did not know what to do. He feared to go to Saul lest he should be slain. He needed a friend to tell him how Saul felt. Can the children understand how one feels when he has done the very best he could and has been kind in every way, and then has some one accuse him unjustly? David trusted in the Lord and obeyed, and the Lord gave him a friend who stood by him and was always true. Let the children give their ideas of how to obtain good friends. We can not buy them. No one can gain true friendship without being a true friend himself.

Jonathan, David's friend. Note that Jonathan was Saul's son. He loved his father, but he saw that he did not treat David justly. Recall how Jonathan showed his bravery in going with his armor-bearer alone into the Philistine camp and attacking and defeating the Philistines. Note his bravery now when he undertakes to plead for David before his father. Saul was so angry that he hurled a javelin at Jonathan for being David's friend. Tell the story of Jonathan's plan to let David know how Saul felt toward him. The lad obeyed Jonathan, but he did not understand why he was told to make haste to bring the arrow to Jonathan. Tell how much David and Jonathan loved each other.

LESSON VII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., May 10.—David spares Saul.—1 Sam. 26: 5-16. Tu.—The power of kindness.—1 Sam. 26: 17-25. Wed.—Good for evil.—1 Sam. 24: 1-8. Th.—Appeal for fairness.—1 Sam. 24: 9-22. Fr.—The law of the kingdom.—Matt. 5: 38-48. Sat.—Duty toward offenders.—Matt. 18: 21-35. Su.—Christian forbearance.—1 Peter 3: 8-17.

David Spares Saul.—1 Samuel 26: 1-25. Print 26: 5-16.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 11, 12)

SUPT.—5 And Da'vid arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and Da'vid beheld the place where Saul lay, and Ab'ner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

School.—6 Then answered Da'vid and said to A-him'e-lech the Hit'tite and to Ab'i-shai the son of Zer-u-i'ah, brother to Jo'ab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Ab'i-shai said, I will go down with thee.

7 So Da'vid and Ab'i-shai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Ab'ner and the people lay round about him.

8 Then said Ab'i-shai to Da'vid, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.

9 And Da'vid said to Ab'i-shai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?

10 Da'vid said furthermore, As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

11 The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

12 So Da'vid took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them.

13 Then Da'vid went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space being between them:

14 And Da'vid cried to the people, and to Ab'ner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Ab'ner? Then Ab'ner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king?

15 And Da'vid said to Ab'ner, Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Is'ra-el? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.

16 This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.

*AMERICAN REVISION

5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had encamped; and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay within the place of the wagons, and the people were encamped round about him.

6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee. 7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the place of the wagons, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people lay round about him. 8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thy hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time. 9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless? 10 And David said, As Jehovah liveth, Jehovah will smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall go down into battle, and perish. 11 Jehovah forbid that I should put forth my hand against Jehovah's anointed: but now take, I pray thee, the spear that is at his head, and the cruse of water, and let us go. 12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's head; and they gat them away: and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither did any awake, for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from Jehovah was fallen upon them.

13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of the mountain afar off; a great space being between them; 14 and David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king? 15 And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept watch over thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. 16 This thing is not good that thou hast done. As Jehovah liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept watch over your lord, Jehovah's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. Luke 6: 27.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The righteous are merciful to all.**

TOPIC.—**A sinner condemned.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Saul seeking David's life. II. Saul in David's power. III. David rebukes Saul. IV. Saul's confession.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1060.**

PLACE.—**Hachilah, fifteen miles southeast of Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—For six or seven years after David left Saul's court, he was an exile, wandering from place to place to escape Saul's efforts to take his life. He and the young men who were with him went to Ahimelech, the priest, at Nob and secured food and the sword he had taken from Goliath. For this act of kindness toward David, Ahimelech and other priests were slain at Saul's command, when he learned from Doeg what had been done. David made his way to Gath in the country of the Philistines to escape from Saul, but the Philistines recognized him and he was obliged to seek safety elsewhere. He gathered about him a company of six hundred loyal persons who had been oppressed under Saul's administration. Among them were his parents and the priest Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech. Abiathar had escaped when the other priests were slain. David

and Jonathan had an interview in the wilderness of Ziph and renewed their pledge to be faithful to each other. At Engedi, where Saul with an army of three thousand chosen men was seeking David, Saul entered a cave where David and his men were hidden and came into David's power. David would not injure Saul nor would he let his men do so, for he was the Lord's anointed. David made himself known to Saul and told him about his cutting off a portion of his garment. Saul acknowledged his guilt in seeking David's life and returned to Gibeah, after having David promise not to cut off his family after he should become king. During this period Samuel died. All Israel mourned for him. David's experience with Nabal is recorded in the chapter preceding the lesson. After Nabal's death, his wife Abigail became David's wife. He also married Ahinoam. Michal, Saul's daughter, had been David's wife, but Saul had taken her from him and had given her to another. During all these years of trial David was becoming constantly better prepared to rule successfully the nation of Israel and raise it to a high place among the nations of the earth.

COMMENTARY.—I. Saul seeking David's life (vs. 1-4). The Ziphites informed Saul where David was, telling him that he was in the hill Hachilah. Once before this the Ziphites had given Saul similar information and he went out to seek him, but word came to him that the Philistines were invading the land, so he left off pursuing after David. This time, however, Saul went with his army of three thousand picked men to Hachilah to find David with his six hundred supporters. Saul made his camp and expected to take David in a short time. David was active and alert. He was not the kind of man to be taken unawares. He sent out spies and learned from them that Saul was pursuing him and where his camp was.

II. Saul in David's power (vs. 5-12). **5. David arose**—He went by night to the camp of Saul to determine exactly the situation of his enemy. **in the trench**—"Within the place of the wagons."—*R. V.* The Hebrew admits of this rendering. The thought is that Saul was in the best fortified or most secure place in the camp. It was a common practise in forming a camp to place the leading officers in the center and arrange the troops in a circle about them. **6. Ahimelech the Hittite**—He is mentioned nowhere else in the scriptures. **Abishai**—Abishai and Joab were David's nephews, the sons of his sister Zeruiah. **I will go down with thee**—In response to David's call for volunteers Abishai said this. This reply shows Abishai's personal bravery and his loyalty to David. **7. spear stuck in the ground at his bolster**—It was customary for a soldier in camp to place his spear thus, that he might quickly be ready to meet an enemy coming suddenly upon him. The spear being near his head, he would simply have to reach out his hand to take it.

8. God hath delivered—On a previous occasion David's friends said to him that the Lord had delivered his enemy into his hand, but David would not harm Saul; and on this occasion Abishai was glad that the day had come when his master would be free from the murderous hatred of Saul, and sought the privilege of smiting the king. **I will not smite him the second time**—For he thought one stroke with the spear would be enough. **9. destroy him not**—David was not seeking to take Saul's life, but was seeking to preserve his own. **against the Lord's anointed**—Even though Saul had been wicked and still had murder in his heart, David recognized the fact that he had been anointed king by Samuel at the Lord's command, and he was still king. As long as the Lord should permit Saul to live, David would consider himself guilty if he should in any way cause him harm. **10. as the Lord liveth**—A reverent appeal to God in confirmation of his faith in what he was saying. **the Lord shall smite him**—David knew that he was to become king. He knew also God's displeasure with Saul. Hence his confidence that the Lord would in his own way cause the removal of Saul. **descend into battle, and perish**—This took place a few years later (ch. 31: 1-6). **11. take thou now the spear**—The purpose in taking the spear and the cruse of water appears a little later. **12. a deep sleep from the Lord**—A similar form of expression is used with reference to Adam's sleeping when a rib was taken from his side for the formation of Eve. No guards were on duty in Saul's camp. All were asleep. It seems strange that an army in the field, when important interests were at stake, should rest so carelessly as to place no sentinels for the protection of the camp. Abner, Saul's captain, was an able man, but he did not have a proper conception of David's bravery and alertness. It must be borne in mind, however, that the Lord was taking David's part.

III. David rebukes Saul (vs. 13-20). **13. to the other side**—Across the valley. Probably David returned to the top of the hill from which he had descended in making his way to Saul's camp. **a great space being between them**—On the former occasion when David spared Saul, he spoke with him face to face, but this time he withdrew to a considerable distance, not trusting Saul as much as he did before. **14. David cried to....Abner**—In the stillness of the night in that country the human voice can be distinctly heard for a long distance from one hilltop to another. **15. who is like to thee in Israel**—Abner was acknowledged to be a powerful man. David reminded him of his neglect to guard the king. **16. now see where the king's spear is**—David took this way to tell Abner that he had been in the very center of Saul's camp and had taken the spear and the cruse of water, and he had not been guarding the king faithfully., **17-20.** Saul heard David's voice and recognized it. David was not slow in assuring the king that he had done nothing amiss. He had in no way injured Saul. He gives Saul to understand that he thinks his course is altogether unworthy of a king. He compares his course to that of chasing a flea or hunting a partridge in the mountains.

IV. Saul's confession (vs. 17-25). Saul was moved by David's forbearance to confess his sin and to acknowledge that he had "played the fool." He seemed to appreciate David's largeheartedness and promised to do him no harm. David assured Saul that he would not put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and expressed his confidence in the Lord's protection. Saul expressed great interest in David and prophesied that he would do great things. After this David went on his way and Saul returned home. David did not have enough confidence in Saul's fixedness of purpose to trust himself in his hands.

QUESTIONS.—Where did David go to escape Saul? How did David feel toward Saul? Who told Saul where David was? How many men did David have with him and who were they? How large an army had Saul? Describe David's visit to Saul's camp. How did Saul feel when he learned what David had done? What did Saul say to David? Why did not David remain with Saul?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The friendship of David and Jonathan. 2. The connection between the events studied last week and those we have now. (1) David at Nob. (2) David at Gath. (3) David at Adullam. (4) David in Moab. (5) Priests slain at Saul's command. (6) David in the wilderness of Ziph. (7) David spares Saul's life at Engedi. (8) Samuel's death. (9) David and Nabal. 3. God's providences sometimes work out slowly.

II. Theme.—Showing kindness to an enemy.

III. Saul's persistent enmity toward David.—1. The attempts to slay David in the palace. 2. The cause of Saul's hatred. 3. The condition of Saul's heart. 4. The state of his mind. 5. The means employed to take David. 6. The size of Saul's army that was pursuing David. 7. Saul's interest in himself compared with his interest in his people. 8. The significance of his slaughter of the priests. 9. Saul was fighting against God.

IV. David's alertness.—1. His escapes from Saul's javelins. 2. A fugitive pursued by an army. 3. His ability to keep track of Saul's movements, even when the Keilites and the Ziphites informed Saul of his whereabouts. 4. Those composing his small company of followers were loyal and alert. 5. He was being trained for kingship.

V. David's forbearance.—1. Honored at first by Saul and then despised. 2. His respect for "the Lord's anointed." 3. His intrepidity in going into Saul's camp with Abishai alone. 4. Refused to let Abishai smite Saul. 5. The Lord favored David's plan. 6. David's words to Saul. 7. Saul's confession and plea. 8. David's greatness shown by this event.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**A sinner condemned.**

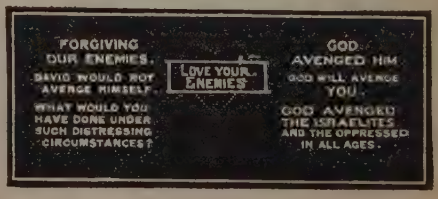
I. By righteous example.
II. By the voice of conscience.

I. By righteous example. Saul, the king of Israel, was bound to David by every tie of gratitude as the man who had saved his life and kingdom; yet his kindness had been shamefully abused, and evil had been returned for good. For three years David had lived the life of a fugitive and in many ways and places had sought to shelter himself against the unrighteous and pitiless wrath of Saul. David was deeply conscious of being a loyal, loving subject, free from ambition or desire to do other than good to his king. He referred to having spared Saul's life as an evidence of this. His aim was not so much to afford a further vindication of himself, as to stay the persecution of Saul and to induce him to act in accordance with his former solemn oath, when David's innocence with respect to any evil design against Saul was fully vindicated. David as much desired that Saul should stand in right relations to God as that he himself should be delivered from evil. All the former reasons for avenging himself still existed and in greater force because of the additional sufferings he had endured. David had a golden opportunity and made golden use of it, for he refused to avenge himself, but suffered his enemy to depart unharmed. Forbearance was mightier than weapons of war. He gave two reasons why he would not destroy Saul or permit others to do it. First, it would be a sinful affront to God's ordinance. It would also be a sinful anticipation of God's providence. The principle upon which his conduct toward Saul was based was an unbounded reverence for God as the source of all power, justice and excellence; a profound respect for every authority that was ordained of God; due subordination to the claims of God and the entire subordination of personal claims. His faith in God yielded the fruit of forbearance and compassion. David could have destroyed Saul, but he would not. Saul would have destroyed David, but could not. David conquered Saul as surely as he conquered Goliath, but his greatest victory was over his own spirit. Abishai had said, "Thine enemy," but David said, "The Lord's anointed." Here were two different views of the same man. David's view-point governed his conduct. The quality of charity is of priceless value, and its exercise shows the greatness of him who possesses it.

II. By the voice of conscience. David's speech was thoroughly suited to sharpen Saul's conscience and lead him to give up his enmity if he still had an ear for the voice of truth. Looking back upon a long course of disobedience and self-will, and more especially upon his recent persecutions of David, Saul declared he had sinned. His history justified his expression of "playing the fool" inasmuch as his public life was marred by a continued attempt to defeat God's arrangements. He had yielded to the impulses of passion and obeyed the dictates of a selfish heart with no regard for the consequences. Saul seemed to have everything in his favor at the beginning of his reign, and yet he came at last to declare his folly, and all because of his failure to follow God at all cost and against all selfish inclinations. He admitted his error, but took no steps to turn his confession to practical advantage. His tendencies were not altered by his interview with David, therefore his recognition of right failed to become a power over his conduct in the succeeding days. There were indications in the interview of increased obduracy in his heart. He acknowledged the contrast between David's conduct and his own. He turned back from his pursuit, as he had done before, but he did not reinstate his son-in-law nor relieve him of the harassing sense of insecurity. His confession did not change his character nor delay his fate. It was intellectual, but not moral. It was an admission of truth, but not a response to its power over the life. Through David's appeal he was prompted to let right and reason exercise a legitimate sway over his thoughts and render just conclusions. Though he appeared humble, he was still proud and obstinate. Though he admitted his folly, he would not renounce it. He had become fixed in his unholy course, and conscience seemed dead.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The deceit of self-confidence. "And, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him" (v. 7). His army about him; David an outlaw and with but a handful of followers; what had he to fear? In addition, "a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them" (v. 12). Lulled to sleep by a sense of false security, outside the protection of divine Providence, how exposed he was to danger! So it is with the sinner in the lethargy of sin. The deceitfulness of sin lulls to deeper slumber. Jonah slept in the storm; Samson slept in the lap of Delilah; Sisera slept in the tent of Jael. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14).

The glory of self-control. "He conquers twice who restrains himself in victory." When the last of Cervera's fleet was beached below Santiago, Captain Phillip of the United States battleship "Texas" said to his men, "Don't cheer, boys, the poor fellows are dying." David gained a greater victory in retiring quietly from the camp of Saul than he won over Goliath. Chrysostom said, "David comes forth from the test with a crown upon his head. It is not the diadem of Saul, but the crown of justice which adorns him. It is not the royal purple which enwraps him, but a wisdom more than human, before which the most gorgeous robe becomes pale."

Love your enemies. "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you" (Golden Text). Zula, a young Greek chieftain who had passed through the horrors of the War of Independence, had been compelled to leave his country because he could not conscientiously endorse the murderous reprisals of his own countrymen; yet he retained such a natural hatred of the oppressors of his country that he maintained the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles would have shown no mercy to the Turks. Under the influence of the Moravians in Ireland, he was converted, and devoted himself to the ministry among those who had been instrumental in leading him into the truth. Little by little his eyes were opened to the all-embracing character of the love of Christ. While studying under a Moravian minister, he hastened one day into his room in great agitation. "Come now, come," he cried, "I see it now!" And leading the way to his own room he pointed to the text, Matt. 5:44, exclaiming, "Love your enemies! Love your enemies! I see it now! Even the Turks! It bids us love our enemies, even the Turks! Even the Turks!" A Chinese emperor, being told that his enemies had raised an insurrection in one of the distant provinces, said, "Come, then, my friends, follow me, and I promise you that we shall quickly destroy them." The rebels submitted on his approach. To the surprise of his followers, the captives were treated with mildness and kindness. His first minister protested, saying, "Is this the manner in which you fulfil your promise? Your royal word was given that your enemies should be destroyed; and behold you have pardoned them all and caressed some of them!" The emperor replied with a gracious air, "I promised to destroy my enemies. I have fulfilled my word; for, see, they are enemies no longer; I have made friends of them." This is the great law of Christian conquest: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—They who love God love their fellow men.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Saul's hatred toward David

David's respect for the king

We should love our enemies

A beginning. Review the story of the friendship of David and Jonathan. Jonathan loved his father, but he saw that he had a bad spirit and was treating David unjustly. Jonathan was David's brother-in-law. Read carefully the chapters between the lesson of last week and that of this week. The story of David's visit to Nob and the consequent slaying of the priests at Saul's command will show how cruel Saul was. The death of Samuel is recorded. Let there be a brief review of his life, especially of his childhood and his interest in Saul. Tell the story of David's sparing Saul in Engedi and that of his visit to Nabal and how he was treated there.

Saul's hatred toward David. Let the children try to tell what David did to make Saul dislike him as he did. They can not point to anything that ought to have made Saul angry. They can tell the story of his being anointed by Samuel at Bethlehem, being called from the care of his father's sheep for the occasion. They all remember his using his sling to slay Goliath. Perhaps they will recall his leading Israel's army to victory over the Philistines. There was no reason why Saul should hate David. Let the children tell some of the things that Saul did because he hated David. He threw his javelin at him in his palace. He ordered his servants and Jonathan to slay him. He had an army of three thousand chosen men to try to capture him. Because Ahimelech, the priest, gave David food and let him have the sword which he had taken from Goliath, Saul slew Ahimelech and other priests. Saul sinned against the Lord and the Holy Spirit left him.

David's respect for Saul. Note the fact that David had been anointed for kingship, as well as Saul. Because Saul was king, David had great respect for him. This will give an opportunity to impress upon the children that they should have respect for our state and national rulers, and also that we should have respect for Christian ministers. David had the opportunity more than once to take the life of Saul, but he would not harm him, even though he knew that at his death he would become king of Israel. Tell the story of the visit of David and Abishai to the camp of Saul, and of their taking Saul's spear and cruse of water. Note that Saul confessed his sins and promised that he would not harm David any more. It is easy to see that David was greater than Saul.

"Love your enemies." Can the children tell who gave the command, "Love your enemies"? Find the place in the New Testament and read the passage to them. Show how true religion changes the heart and takes away hatred and puts love there. Let the class tell in what way love is better than hate.

LESSON VIII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., May 17.—David king over Judah and Israel.—2 Sam. 2:1-7; 5:1-5. Tu.—Saul's death.—1 Sam. 31:1-13. Wed.—Abner secedes to David.—2 Sam. 3:17-30. Th.—David's sorrow over Abner's death.—2 Sam. 3:31-39 Fr.—Ish-bosheth slain.—2 Sam. 4:5-12. Sat.—Promises to David.—1 Chron. 17:1-15. Su.—David's faith.—1 Chron. 17:16-27.

David King over Judah and Israel.—2 Samuel 2: 1-7; 5: 1-5.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses 5:2, 3)

SUPT.—1 And it came to pass after this, that Da'vid enquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Ju'dah? And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And Da'vid said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto He'bron.

School.—2 So Da'vid went up thither, and his two wives also, A-hin'o-am the Jez-reel-i'tess, and Ab'i-gail Na'bal's wife the Car'mel-ite.

3 And his men that were with him did Da'vid bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of He'bron.

4 And the men of Ju'dah came, and there they anointed Da'vid king over the house of Ju'dah. And they told Da'vid, saying, That the men of Ja-besh-gil'e-ad were they that buried Saul.

5 And Da'vid sent messengers unto the men of Ja-besh-gil'e-ad, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.

6 And now the Lord shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

7 Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Ju'dah have anointed me king over them.

1 Then came all the tribes of Is'ra-el to Da'vid unto He'bron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Is'ra-el: and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Is'ra-el, and thou shalt be a captain over Is'ra-el.

3 So all the elders of Is'ra-el came to the king to He'bron; and king Da'vid made a league with them in He'bron before the Lord: and they anointed Da'vid king over Is'ra-el.

4 Da'vid was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.

5 In He'bron he reigned over Ju'dah seven years and six months: and in Je-ru'sa-lem he reigned thirty and three years over all Is'ra-el and Ju'dah.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 And it came to pass after this, that David inquired of Jehovah, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And Jehovah said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron. 2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. 3 And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. 4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

And they told David, saying, The men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul. 5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of Jehovah, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. 6 And now Jehovah show lovingkindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing. 7 Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be ye valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. 2 In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and Jehovah said to thee, Thou shalt be shepherd of my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel. 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a covenant with them in Hebron before Jehovah: and they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped. Psa. 28:7.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord is faithful in fulfilling his promises.**

TOPIC.—**Fidelity rewarded.**

OUTLINE.—**I. David made king of Judah. II. Message to Jabesh-gilead. III. David made king of all Israel.**

TIME.—**David made king of Judah B. C. 1055; of all Israel B. C. 1048.**

PLACE.—**Hebron.**

INTRODUCTION.—It was about five years after David spared Saul's life at Hachilah that he became king of Judah. During all this time he was an exile. For some time he lived in the land of the Philistines, having obtained the town of Ziklag from Achish. When war was renewed by the Philistines upon Israel, David and his men were about to go with them, but the chiefs of the Philistines objected, hence David was sent back. His town was attacked in his absence by the Amalekites and his property was taken away. He pursued them and recovered what had been taken. When the Israelites were engaged in war with the Philistines at Gilboa, Saul and Jonathan and two other sons lost their lives. When David heard of it, he mourned deeply. He respected Saul as king and loved Jonathan as his own soul. His lament (2 Sam. 1:19-27) over the death of these men is most tender. It shows the warm, compassionate nature of the writer. His sorrow was genuine. We have followed David from the time of his anointing by Samuel in his father's house, through the exaltations and humiliations that came to him. By all these he was being prepared for his life-work. He endured his trials patiently and maintained his trust in God and his devotion to him. He was now about to realize the fulfilment of the prophecy embraced in his anointing several years before this.

COMMENTARY.—I. DAVID MADE KING OF JUDAH (2:1-4). 1. after this—After the death of Saul and Jonathan in the battle at Gilboa, in which the Philistines defeated the Israelites. **shall I go up**—David knew that he was to become king of Israel and he sought divine guidance as to how he should enter upon this work.

We can not detect any personal ambition in David. He inquired of the Lord by Abiathar, the high priest. **unto Hebron**—David and his followers were then living in Ziklag, which had been granted to him by the Philistines. He was to go into purely Israelitish territory. Hebron was a city in the patriarchal period (Gen. 13:18; Josh. 10:3). It was the center of the tribe of Judah, and was a fitting place for him to occupy. The region was mountainous and could be easily defended. David was familiar with this country, as it was but a few miles from Bethlehem, his native place. The northern part of the land of Israel was troubled by the Philistines and parts were loyal to the house of Saul. **2. Jezreelitess**—The Jezreel which was the country of Ahinoam was in the land of Judah, as was also Carmel, the home of Abigail. God's plan in the beginning was that a man should have but one living wife, and this is still his plan. In patriarchal and later times polygamy was in a sense permitted. **3. his men that were with him**—Those who had been loyal to him during the years of his exile. **with his household**—They had come to have a measurably settled abode at Ziklag. **cities of Hebron**—These were smaller towns situated near Hebron and perhaps dependent upon it. David provided for his supporters and their families in the new location. **4. the men of Judah came**—They were friendly toward him. The fact that he distributed presents to the people of Judah a short time before this (1 Sam. 30:26-31) shows that he regarded them as his friends, and this act might have made them still more friendly toward him. **they anointed David king over....Judah**—David had already been anointed privately by Samuel to mark God's choice of him as the future king, but it was natural that the ceremony should now be repeated publicly as the formal inauguration of his reign, and even a third time, when he was made king over all Israel.—*Cam. Bib.* The time was not yet ripe for all the tribes of Israel to come under his leadership. He was loyally accepted by Judah, who had met together and elected him their king. He had patience to wait God's time for the kingdom to become united. He had been learning patience during the past ten years, and he was becoming fitted for an illustrious reign over the nation.

II. MESSAGE TO JABESH-GILEAD (2:5-7). **5. unto the men of Jabesh-gilead**—When the people of Jabesh-gilead heard that the Philistines had mutilated the body of Saul they went and took it and the bodies of his sons to Jabesh and buried them. David heard of their respect for Saul and his sons and their kindly act in burying their remains, and he sent a message to them, commending their kindness. **blessed be ye of the Lord**—David's piety finds expression on this occasion. His large-heartedness is shown in his thoughtfulness with regard to the remains of his enemy. **6. I also will requite you this kindness**—The message he was then sending was a recognition of their regard for Saul and his sons. **7. be ye valiant**—David manifested a real interest in the men of Jabesh-gilead. They were without a king and were liable to be attacked by the Philistines. **house of Judah have anointed me king over them**—David's message to this people was not only a commendation of their regard for Saul, but it was also, without doubt, an act of diplomacy, by which he thought he might induce them to accept of him as king. Jabesh became the seat of the northern kingdom, which was ruled by Ish-bosheth, the only surviving son of Saul. Abner was the military head of the northern tribes and it was through his efforts that this kingdom continued for a few years.

III. DAVID MADE KING OF ALL ISRAEL (5:1-5). **1. then came all the tribes of Israel to David**—There had been hostility between the kingdom of Judah and that of the north, and finally the former obtained a victory over the latter. Ish-bosheth had been assassinated and David had caused the assassins to be put to death. Probably it was not long after the death of Ish-bosheth that representatives of all the tribes of Israel assembled at Hebron and elected him king. **we are thy bone and thy flesh**—All the tribes were of one blood. They had come from a common ancestor. They had the same God and had received the same divine promises. This was one reason why all should be under one king. **2. thou....leddest out and broughtest in Israel**—A second reason for allegiance to David was, that he had been a successful leader against Israel's enemies. **thou shalt feed my people Israel**—The king is represented under the figure of a shepherd. David had been a shepherd and knew that a shepherd should provide pasture, water and protection for his sheep. The king should have a tender care for his subjects. **a captain**—David was to be more than a provider for his people. He was to rule over them and to be their military leader. It seemed essential, in view of the numerous enemies that were ready to attack Israel, that there should be a strong military power in the government, but we remember that God mightily defended his people when they obeyed and trusted him.

3. elders of Israel—The leading men of the various tribes. **made a league**—The people had declared that David should be the king of all Israel, so he entered into a solemn contract with them, they promising to do certain things on their part and he pledging that he would do certain things. **before the Lord**—The covenant was made as a solemn religious ceremony, in the presence of the supreme King of Israel, whose vicegerent David was.—*Cam. Bib.* **they anointed David king**—This was the third time he was anointed for the kingship of Israel. **4. thirty years old**—This was the age at which priests entered upon their duties. Joseph was made ruler of Egypt at thirty. Jesus entered upon his public ministry at this age. This was the age of maturity. **5. in Hebron**—His capital during the seven and a half years that he was king over Judah alone. **in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years**—Jerusalem was a stronghold, a part of which was held by the Jebusites until David had become king of all Israel. The hill Zion is the southwestern portion of Jerusalem. The deep valley of Hinnom lies on the west and south and the Tyropœon valley on the north and east. David gained possession of Jerusalem and made it his capital during the last thirty-three years of his long reign.

QUESTIONS.—What events are recorded in David's life from the time he spared Saul's life in Hachilah to his being made king at Hebron? What question did David ask the Lord? Why did he send a message to Jabesh? Who came to David after he had been reigning seven years at Hebron, and for what purpose? How many times and on what occasions was David anointed? How long did David reign in Jerusalem?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. David's abodes during the interval between his sparing Saul at Hachilah and his being made king. 2. Saul and the witch of Endor. 3. David and the Amalekites. 4. The death of Saul and his sons at Mount Gilboa. 5. The enemies of Israel. 6. God's care over his people in all their reverses.

II. Theme.—David made king.

III. King over Judah.—1. David's fitness for kingship. (1) His disposition. (a) Faith. (b) Patience. (c) Bravery. (2) His direct call. (3) His varied experiences. (4) His love for his people. (5) He was loved by Israel. 2. Israel's need of a king. 3. David's inquiry of the Lord as to his course. 4. Removal to Hebron. 5. The importance of Hebron. 6. The anointing at Hebron.

IV. David and the men of Jabesh-Gilead.—1. The treatment by the Philistines of the bodies of Saul and his sons. 2. The help Saul had formerly given to the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead (1 Sam. 11:4-11). 3. The men of Jabesh had cared for the bodies of Saul and his sons. 4. David's commendation of the act of the men of Jabesh. 5. Encouragement given to them. 6. David announced king over Judah.

V. King over all Israel.—1. The condition of the northern tribes after Saul's death. (1) Made Saul's son Ish-bosheth king. (2) Hostility between his kingdom and that of David. 2. The victory of Judah at Gibeon. 3. The death of Ish-bosheth. 4. The assembly of all the tribes at Hebron to make David king over them. 5. They acknowledged that he was king by the Lord's appointment. 6. The length of David's reign. 7. Steps in David's advancement.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Fidelity rewarded.**

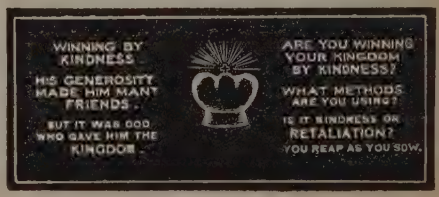
I. According to divine ordination.
II. By mutual covenant with Israel.

I. According to divine ordination. David, the man after God's own heart, looked out on his opening prospects with a careful eye. It was his genuine piety that prompted him to wait upon God when trouble ceased and success began. Past discipline had manifestly wrought in David such confidence in the order of Providence and such breadth of vision with respect to divine methods, as to render him indifferent to unhallowed suggestions. He was a much stronger man as a consequence of the protracted trials of past years, than he would have been had there been no waiting for the realization of hopes enkindled by the promise of God. The sobriety, caution and self-restraint, acquired in adversity, served him well under all the distracting and diverting influences of an elevation to the throne of Judah. There was greater demand for skill, watchfulness and caution than ever. The beginning of prosperity was a time of peculiar danger when more subtle temptations would arise. His final triumph depended upon how he improved his partial success. A man of less faith than David would have despaired of witnessing the day when the whole nation would, by a solemn act of coronation, fall in with the purpose of God. His cheerful acceptance of partial success was in keeping with his former patient endurance of deferred hope. It was to him a pledge of still farther advance, until God's original promise should be literally, and in its entirety, fulfilled. It is to the honor of David that he retained amid all the new and perilous conditions his old tenderness of feeling and noble generosity. His first recorded act after his accession to the throne of Judah was of a kingly nature, that of sending a message of peace and good-will to the men of Jabesh-Gilead. He would have them know how sincerely he cherished the remembrance of their kindness to Saul. Those who took part in David's inauguration at Hebron acted in fulfilment of the divine purpose concerning him, and also in the fulfilment of the divine prediction concerning the preeminence of Judah. David became king of the people of Judah by their own choice. In acting independently of the other tribes, Judah neither aimed at dominion over them nor separation from them.

II. By mutual covenant with Israel. By the death of Saul and Jonathan the obstacles to David's accession to the throne were removed in part only. Abner, captain of Saul's host, whose personal motives induced him to act in direct opposition to God, defeated the earnest efforts of David to ward off strife, so that it was his bitter lot to see the kingdom torn by civil war. The time came after seven and one half years, when all Israel met to do what God intended should be done. Through the loyalty of David the union was effected. It was Israel's duty to seek David's leadership, as well as his to undertake it. His anointing by Samuel secured his right to the kingdom. His anointing by Israel gave him authority over the kingdom. David did not take that honor unto himself without being called of God and desired by the people. His acceptance of it was unselfish, patriotic and devout. It marked one of the greatest days of Israel's history. The approval of Jehovah rested on the union of the tribes. The wisdom of David's self-restraint in the days of persecution and his trust in God rather than in weapons of war, were fully justified on the day of his coronation. He had the joy of being assured that God had brought him to the throne and that he was ready for the place made ready for him and that he had the confidence and affection of his nation. He was ordained for two purposes, a shepherd and a captain, qualified by kindred relationships and tested ability. It was a new thing for the tribes to see a man of spirit, conscious of a high destiny to work out, and urged on as by a divine inspiration to perform deeds unthought of for many generations. David's league was an engagement on his part to rule according to the divine will. It involved the obligation of the people to obey him according to the same will. Regard for the purity of the national life and the honor of him who originally gave the land to Israel for an inheritance determined David to seize Jerusalem. His aim was to form a national life on solid foundations and to develop all that constituted true greatness.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

This lesson is a most fruitful field for the study of typology. Inasmuch as Christ is David's son, it must be conceded that David was a type of Christ. Notice points of similarity and points of contrast.

Points of similarity. 1. In age. "And David was thirty years old when he began to reign" (ch. 5:4). "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23). 2. In appointment. David was king by divine appointment (ch. 5:2). "Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH * * * even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne" (Zech. 6:12, 13). 3. In ordination. David was anointed king (ch. 2:4). So Christ was anointed in the descent of the Spirit at the time of his baptism (John 1:32), which he acknowledged to be the fulfilment of scripture (Luke 4:21). 4. In work. "Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel" (ch. 5:2). It is the function of a shepherd to feed, of a captain to lead and protect. So Christ is the good Shepherd (John 10:11), and the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10). 5. In operations. David reigned over the lesser kingdom first as a preparation to ruling over the greater (ch. 5:5). So Christ reigns in the heart of the believer (Rom. 14:17) until he shall enter upon that kingdom "which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44). 6. In conquests. David captured the stronghold of the city and dwelt in it (ch. 5:7, 9). Christ lays siege to the citadel of the human heart, fortified as it is by sin and unbelief, captures it and makes it his dwelling-place (Gal. 2:20). 7. In growth. "And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him" (ch. 5:10). "Behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13, 14).

Points of contrast. 1. "David * * * reigned forty years" (ch. 5:4); but of Christ it is said, "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. 9:7). 2. David was a king who was a man of war and a shedder of blood (1 Chron. 28:3); but Christ is a king who is the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6) and who came to give peace and good-will to men (Luke 2:14). 3. David sinned (Psa. 51:1-3), but Christ was a king "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22). 4. David "served his own generation by the will of God" (Acts 13:36) and "slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David" (1 Kings 2:10); but Christ was raised from the dead and "saw no corruption" (Acts 13:37), becoming "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:15, 16). "Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37). Will you let this King rule your heart and life? G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—David honored the Lord and the Lord honored him.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

David was king { Of Judah 7½ years / Of all Israel 33 years

BRAVE, KIND, DEVOTED.

A review. Let the children tell the story of David's sparing Saul at Hachilah. David knew that Saul was trying to find him that he might put him to death, but he did not wish to do a thing that would hurt Saul. It was a peculiar visit that David and Abishai made to Saul's camp in the night and carried away his spear and cruse of water. This was done simply to show Saul that he could easily have slain him, but he had no desire to do so. He had a forgiving spirit. He had respect for the man whom the Lord had made king of Israel.

David, king of Judah. Ten years or more before this time David had been anointed as the future king of Israel to take the place of Saul who had become unfit to rule. The Spirit of God had left Saul because he became sinful. Saul died in battle and three of his sons with him. Have a map showing the tribes of Israel. Point out Mount Gilboa, where Saul fought against the Philistines and was defeated and slain. Note that David with his few followers was far southwest at Ziklag at the time. David knew that he was to be king at Saul's death, but he did not know how he was to begin. Give the picture of David before the Lord, asking him if he should go into Judah and to what place. Point out Hebron and tell how much the people of Judah loved David and how they wished him to be their king. He was again anointed king and reigned over Judah, which was only a small part of Israel. David had learned patience in his fleeing from Saul, who had wished to take his life. For seven and a half years David was king of Judah and lived at Hebron.

David, king of all Israel. During a portion of these seven and a half years the rest of Israel was ruled by Ish-bosheth, Saul's son. These tribes were loyal to Saul and would have his son for king, although the Lord had declared that David should be king. Note the fact that there was war between the two kingdoms. After a while Ish-bosheth was slain and all the tribes came to Hebron to make David king over them. David was again anointed king. God's words came true. Note how unlike a king David was when he was fleeing from Saul, but God so directed affairs that David ruled all Israel. Tell the story of the removal of his capital from Hebron to Jerusalem.

Brave, kind, devoted. Let the class tell some things about David to show that he was brave as a boy and as a man. Can they suggest something to prove that he was kind? Let them show that he was devoted to God. We all admire those who are brave and strong. We like to hear again and again the story of David's bravery in going forth alone to meet the giant Goliath. He was strong and skilful, for he was devoted to the Lord and the Lord helped him greatly. We, too, may be brave, kind and devoted.

LESSON IX

HOME READINGS.—Mon., May 24.—David brings the ark to Jerusalem.—2 Sam. 6:1-15. Tu.—David's rejoicing.—2 Sam. 6:16-23. Wed.—David's prayer.—2 Sam. 7:18-29. Th.—The ark of the covenant.—Exod. 25:10-22. Fr.—Jehovah's presence.—Psa. 125. Sat.—Joy in the sanctuary.—Psa. 122. Su.—Jehovah entering Zion.—Psa. 24.

David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem.—2 Samuel 6: 1-19; Psalm 24: 1-10. Print 2 Samuel 6: 12-15; Psalm 24: 1-10.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 7-10)

SUPT.—12 And it was told king Da'vid, saying, The Lord hath blessed the house of O-bed-e'dom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So Da'vid went and brought up the ark of God from the house of O-bed-e'dom into the city of Da'vid with gladness.

School.—13 And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.

14 And Da'vid danced before the Lord with all his might; and Da'vid was girded with a linen e'phod.

15 So Da'vid and all the house of Is'ra-el brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

1 The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

2 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

5 He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Ja'cob. Se'lah.

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Se'lah.

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12 And it was told king David, saying, Jehovah hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. And David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with joy. 13 And it was so, that, when they that bare the ark of Jehovah had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. 14 And David danced before Jehovah with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. 15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of Jehovah with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

1 The earth is Jehovah's, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
2 For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.
3 Who shall ascend into the hill of Jehovah?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood,
And hath not sworn deceitfully.
5 He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
6 This is the generation of them that seek after him,
That seek thy face, even Jacob.
[Selah
7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory will come in.
8 Who is the King of glory?
Jehovah strong and mighty,
Jehovah mighty in battle.
9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of glory will come in.
10 Who is this King of glory?
Jehovah of hosts,
He is the King of glory.
[Selah

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Psa. 122: 1.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**There is joy connected with true worship.**

TOPIC.—**A nation seeking God.**

OUTLINE.—**I. The removal of the ark of the covenant. II. The ark brought into Jerusalem. III. A song of triumph.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1040.**

PLACES.—**Kirjath-jearim; Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—David's change of the capital from Hebron to Jerusalem involved the subjugation of the Jebusites who occupied a portion of the site of Jerusalem. They defied David, thinking they were sufficient to withstand any force that might be led against them, inasmuch as they held a strongly-defended position. David, however, took the stronghold and made his home there. He became stronger and stronger in his kingdom. Hiram, king of Tyre, aided him in building him a house. The Philistines heard of his being king and gathered their forces to attack him. They approached the region of Jerusalem, but David gave battle and defeated them. Again they came to the same region, and again they were disastrously defeated. In the present lesson we study Israel as a nation turning toward the Lord.

COMMENTARY.—I. THE REMOVAL OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT (6:1-11). 1-5. This sacred object had not held its proper place in the nation for something like a hundred years. It had been taken by the Israelites into battle, had been captured by the Philistines and had been returned to Israelitish territory (1 Sam. 4-7). After David had become established king over all Israel and was prosperous, he determined to remove the ark of the covenant from Baale of Judah, or Kirjath-jearim, to Jerusalem, where he had erected a tabernacle for its reception. The

ceremony of removing the ark was to be national in character and was to show the devotion of all Israel to God, whose presence the ark signified. The ark was placed upon a new cart, one that had never been profaned by any other service; yet this was not in accordance with divine directions, for the ark was to be carried by Levites only (Num. 3:29-31; 7:9). Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of the priest Abinadab, had immediate charge of the ark. There were demonstrations of joy as the procession moved toward Jerusalem.

6-11. The rejoicing suddenly ceased as the ark reached the thrashing-floor of Nachor, a few miles from its destination. Either because the oxen stumbled or the road was rough, the ark seemed likely to fall and Uzzah reached out his hand and touched it to steady it. This was unlawful and he was stricken dead by the hand of the Lord. This punishment was to show Israel the sacredness of the ark of the covenant and to teach respect for God's law. David was afraid to have the ark carried to Jerusalem, and decided that for a time it was better to have it kept in the house of Obed-edom. Here it was left for three months.

II. The ark brought into Jerusalem (6:12-19). **12. the Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom**—Obed-edom had devoutly performed a sacred duty in receiving the ark of the covenant into his home and caring for it. The blessing of the Lord is upon all who perform loving service for him. **so David went**—Seeing the blessing that came to Obed-edom on account of the presence of the ark in the house, David was encouraged to complete its removal to Jerusalem. **13. had gone six paces**—The requirements of the law were now duly observed, as is recorded at length in 1 Chron. 15, where further details are given about the preparation of a tent to receive the ark, the number of Levites who took part in the ceremony, and the arrangements for the music which accompanied the procession.—*Cam. Bib.* The removal of the ark was successfully begun and at once David arranged for the offering of sacrifices. **14. David danced before the Lord**—From the most ancient times, both among the Jews and other nations, dancing formed a part of the ceremonies of religious processions and festivals, but the performers were usually a band of females (Exod. 15:20; Judges 11:34; 21:21; 1 Sam. 18:6). When persons of different sexes engaged, they seem always to have kept in separate companies, and never to have danced promiscuously.—*Whedon.* David's joy was great and he gave expression to it by dancing "before the Lord with all his might." **girded with a linen ephod**—This was a garment worn distinctively by the priest, but upon this special religious occasion David put one on. From the account in 1 Chronicles we learn that David was clothed in a robe of fine linen and also an ephod of linen. The ephod was a shoulder garment and was girded under the arms. **15. with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet**—This was an occasion of unusual religious interest. Throughout history times of special outpourings of the Holy Spirit have been characterized by demonstrations of deep emotion, either of burden of soul for sinners or of holy joy. **16-19.** Michal, David's wife, was displeased with his dancing before the Lord, because she thought his conduct unbecoming a king. His answer is found in the last three verses of the chapter. The ark was brought into Jerusalem and placed in the tabernacle prepared for it. Sacrifices were offered and David pronounced a blessing upon the people in the name of the Lord. David gave food to all the multitude and the people went to their homes. Solomon offered sacrifices later at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings 8:62-65).

III. A song of triumph (Psa. 24). **1. the earth is the Lord's**—The title of this psalm indicates only the fact that David wrote it. It is generally supposed that it was composed for this occasion, and the singers joined in singing it as the procession moved toward Jerusalem. The thought throughout is lofty and reverential. God is the proprietor of the earth and all that is in it. David was king, but he conceded that God's right to any part of the earth was prior to his own. **2. he hath founded it upon the seas**—The work of creation is ascribed to God. "It is God who lifts up the earth from out of the sea, so that the dry land, which otherwise might in a moment be submerged, as in the days of Noah, is kept from the floods. The hungry jaws of ocean would devour the dry land if a constant fiat of Omnipotence did not protect it."—*Spurgeon.* **3. who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord**—The place of divine favor, of communion with God, is not an ordinary place. It is elevated. A union of divine effort and human is essential for a human being to reach it. **shall stand**—Having attained this elevation, who shall continue there? **4. he that hath clean hands**—He whose outward life is correct or in conformity to the law of God. **a pure heart**—The springs of action are clean. The heart is made pure by faith in God through the blood of the atonement. **hath not....sworn deceitfully**—There is no trickery or double-dealing in those who are in God's "holy place." **5. the blessing from the Lord**—The conscious favor of God. He makes it possible for us to be right and then bestows a reward upon us for being and doing right. **6. this is the generation of them that seek him**—Not Jews alone, but all persons everywhere who seek the Lord and are clean in heart and in life belong to the generation who enjoy God's favor and blessing. "Let the mere professor as he reads these verses listen to the voice which saith, 'And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' "—*Spurgeon.* **Selah**—A pause in the song, that force or strength may be gathered for succeeding measures; or it may mark a change in the thought.

7. lift up your heads, O ye gates—As the procession, bringing the ark of the covenant, approached the gates of Jerusalem, this part of the psalm was sung. Let the gates be swung wide open or let the gateway be enlarged, for there comes the symbol of the divine presence, the ark of the covenant. The last four verses of the psalm express the glorious majesty of the Lord. We can imagine with what emotion a great company would sing the marvelous words on the occasion described in this lesson. **8. the Lord mighty in battle**—Referring to the great victories the Lord had given to Israel. **9. the King of glory**—The all-glorious King. **10. the Lord of hosts**—The God of the universe. The God of angelic hosts and of men.

QUESTIONS.—Where had the ark of the covenant been for many years? What great religious movement is described in this lesson? Describe the removal of the ark to the house of Obed-edom. How long was it there? Describe its removal to Jerusalem. What expressions of joy were made? What parts of Psa. 24 indicate that it was written for this occasion?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. Great events in the life of David. 2. The conquest of Jerusalem. 3. David's prosperity. (1) His people's affection for him. (2) The respect Hiram, king of Tyre, had for him. 4. David's victories over the Philistines in the valley of Rephaim. 5. David's reliance upon God for guidance and victory. 6. Points of difference between him and Saul.

II. Theme.—A religious awakening in Israel.

III. The ark in Kirjath-jearim.—1. Captured by the Philistines at Ebenezer. 2. Sent back into Israel. 3. A long time in comparative neglect. 4. During the entire reign of Saul. 5. What the lack of God's presence means. 6. Remembering God. 7. Longing for the divine presence and favor.

IV. The sanctity of the ark.—1. The great assembly to bring the ark to Jerusalem. 2. The first error in transporting the ark; drawn on a cart. 3. The first error led to disaster,—the death of Uzzah. 4. The punishment was severe to show the sanctity of the ark and the sacredness of God's commands.

V. The blessedness of God's presence.—1. Its providential presence in the house of Obed-edom. 2. Devotedly cared for. 3. A blessing upon the home. 4. The rewards of devotion to God's cause. 5. How God's presence may be realized.

VI. Religious joy.—1. The removal of the ark from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem. 2. The rejoicing. 3. Religious emotion prevails where God is working. 4. There are many to find fault with rejoicing and victorious saints. 5. God exalted in the psalm sung on the occasion of bringing the ark to Jerusalem. 6. The saints glorify God.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**A nation seeking God.**

I. Held to strict observance of law.
II. Blessed in united consecration.

I. Held to strict observance of law. The establishment of a strong center of government at Jerusalem was David's first kingly victory. As shepherd of the nation, he saw that to fulfil its highest destiny it must rest upon a strictly religious foundation. The union of all the tribes, the conquest of Jerusalem, the defeat of the Philistines, all prepared the way for the re-establishment of national religion. The thought of a restoration of the piety of former days was an inspiration to David. His ruling passion was zeal for the house and worship of God. There appears to have been at this period a general neglect of the law of Moses and ignorance of its requirements. The glories of the ark had largely passed into history. To recover the ark would be to Israel the coming back of God himself to a people whom he had temporarily forsaken. David exhibited a commendable desire to interest the whole nation, as far as possible, in the solemn service. His soul was aroused to grasp spiritual realities, and through him came the awakening of a new enthusiasm, remarkable in the national life contrasted with the stolid indifference during the reign of Saul. In placing the ark on a new cart drawn by oxen, after the manner of the heathen, they acted contrary to the divine ordinance, as David subsequently acknowledged. The death of Uzzah was an impressive demonstration that Jehovah their God was still among them the living God, the Almighty, the Holy One, observing and punishing sin. It showed that their laws were not obsolete though forgotten. It formed a part of the educational process by which God was bringing the people out of their low spiritual condition that they might be more effective in carrying out his purposes in the world. By none was the death of Uzzah more keenly felt than by the king. David was seeking to revive and reestablish religion in Israel and this disaster appeared to be a hindrance to his good design, but in fact it promoted it more effectually. It was a warning that was adapted to guide and restrain David and to teach him that divine law must be first regarded. While Uzzah treated the ark with irreverence and David regarded it with dread, Obed-edom received it with reverence and godly fear. The same hand that punished Uzzah's presumption rewarded Obed-edom's humble boldness. No special benediction had fallen upon Uzzah's home. The ark had been as a piece of furniture in his father's house. He had no consciousness of the divine presence connected with it. The difference was between mere lodgment and generous, appreciative hospitality. To Obed-edom the ark brought a sense of God's presence and love. While he guarded the ark of God he was himself guarded by the God of the ark. It was the occasion of moral and spiritual fruitfulness. The happiness and goodness of that pious household influenced at length all the nation.

II. Blessed in united consecration. Through Obed-edom David's faith was quickened. Although he was shocked and alarmed by the death of Uzzah, he did not give up his purpose. At length he led the people in united consecration to bring the ark to Jerusalem. The accomplishment of his delayed purpose was marked by strict obedience to the law of God, and carried out with more careful and diligent preparation than before. It was accompanied with repeated worship. A tabernacle was made ready for it befitting its nature. It was a united national transaction. It was a season of great gladness. It was the inauguration of a better era in religion. It was the greatest day in David's life, the turning-point in the history of the nation, a glorious consummation. It made manifest the character of Israel's king. The spring of David's joy lay in his restored perception of what the ark of the covenant really was to himself and his people. Michal, David's wife, the daughter of Saul, could not appreciate the religious element in David's character. She was not in the spirit of the day. Her words of insult and reproach bespeak the character which led Saul to become a snare to David. They were bitterness in David's cup of joy. Of all Israel Michal was the only one to despise David. His gentle, but firm, reply revealed his suffering while it bespoke his firm purpose to be true to the religion of his nation. T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The ark in the home (v. 12). The value of the ark to the home depends entirely upon the attitude of the individual. The ark had been in the home of Abinadab over twenty years, but he had not been specially blessed by it. It was in the home of Obed-edom three months; and, according to Josephus, "The ark touched Obed-edom as the poorest in the place, and it left him the richest." Evidently Abinadab paid little attention to it, while Obed-edom was an obedient and reverent worshiper. Hundreds have the Bible in their homes and never read it. Other hundreds read the letter only, and know nothing of the Spirit which giveth life. Every nation needs the blessing of the Lord upon its homes. Make room, then, for the ark of God. Dr. Robertson says, "The devil might whisper, 'Of all houses, yours seems the least able to have the ark of God. You are a poor man, and there are a lot of children. You need that corner for sacks of wheat. You do not have a corner to spare.' Oh, if you help the ark, God will help you; never fear. Cast out something and bring it in. Let it be first, and God will see to the payment."

The seat of the scornful (v. 16). There are none so blind as those who will not see. There are none so deaf as those who will not hear. Michal was blind to the glory of God's ark and deaf to the music of David's Te Deum, else she had been out with the procession rather than staying at home alone. Hence she was in the proper spirit to be cold, critical and to despise David in her heart. Holy joy has been the heritage of the saints of all ages. The dancing Davids have a divine warrant for their manifestations, for the promise is, "I will clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy" (Psa. 132:16).

The pure in heart (Psa. 24:4). There is a vast difference between ordinary and chemical purity. It is a scientific fact that we can not be made chemically pure by any process which would not injure or destroy us. The process of crystallization in chemical solutions is started by the presence of some impurity in the form of motes or dust-particles. A glass rod which has been made chemically clean by being washed in strong acids can be placed in the solution without producing the slightest change in it, provided the solution has been kept absolutely free from contamination by having a coating of wool to strain the air. The chemist may then wash his hands with the strongest soap, touch the rod with his clean fingers, insert it in the solution and crystallization starts at once. As it is with the physical, so it is with the moral. If, like Job, we wash with snow water (Job 9:30), or "though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much sope, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God" (Jer. 2:22). But just as it is possible for the chemist to produce chemical purity, so is it possible for God to produce moral purity. Hence we can pray with confidence, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean" (Psa. 51:7).

The four processions. The first was the removal of the ark from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem. The second was Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The third was the flight of the glorified body of Christ into the eternal habitations. The fourth will be his triumphant return to earth to receive his redeemed people. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—There is joy in the service of the Lord.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

ARK OF THE COVENANT { IN GIBEAH / WITH OBED-EDOM / IN JERUSALEM

The ark of the covenant. Describe the ark of the covenant, showing how large it was, what the cover was and that the cherubim were on the top of it. Some child may be liable to confuse this with the ark in which Noah and his family and the animals were saved from the flood. The ark of the covenant was like a chest, while the other ark was like a great ship. In the ark of the covenant were the two tables of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments. These were to teach the Israelites and all of us how to live and what to do. There was a pot of manna like that upon which the people were fed for forty years in the wilderness. This would remind them that God provides for his people. In the ark was also Aaron's rod that budded and produced almonds. This would teach the people that God has all power.

In Gibeah, or Kirjath-jearim. Tell the story again of the taking of the ark into battle and its capture by the Philistines and the trouble it made them. It was sent back and was in Kirjath-jearim many years, and it seems as if it must have been almost forgotten. The ark of the covenant was to be at the real center of Israelitish worship, but it was neglected. The people did not pay as much attention to religion as they ought. At the present time there are many who neglect the house of the Lord. They neither attend church nor do they have prayer in their homes. We should pity children whose parents do not pray. Children who have Christian homes should be thankful. A revival of religion was coming to Israel.

With Obed-edom. David was king of all Israel and was living in Jerusalem. He believed the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant and all that went with them ought to be there, so he arranged to have a great company go to Kirjath-jearim to bring the ark to Jerusalem. Tell the story of how the ark was for three months in the house of Obed-edom. He welcomed it and was glad to have it there. It represented the presence of the Lord; and where people welcome him there is a blessing for them. We may have the Lord with us all the while. We do not have the ark of the covenant in our churches or in our homes, but the Lord is with those who love him. His presence brings strength and courage for his service.

In Jerusalem. David decided the time had come for the ark to be brought to Jerusalem. He had made a tabernacle for it, and a great crowd went to accompany it on the way. Tell that it was carried on the shoulders of Levites. The people sang and shouted and David danced for joy, because it was being brought to Jerusalem. It was taken into the tabernacle and then all the people worshiped the Lord. Repeat or read the psalm contained in the lesson. There is blessing in worshiping the Lord. Let the children give their ideas of what it is to worship the Lord.

LESSON X

HOME READINGS.—Mon., May 31.—Nathan rebukes David.—2 Sam. 11:22-12:7. Tu.—David's sin.—2 Sam. 11:14-21. Wed.—David's punishment.—2 Sam. 12:7-23. Th.—A cry for pardon.—Psa. 51. Fr.—Thirsting for God.—Psa. 42. Sat.—Prayer of penitence.—Psa. 38. Su.—Penitence and restoration.—Hosea 14.

Nathan Rebukes David.—2 Samuel 11: 1-12: 7. Print 11: 22-12: 7.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 5-7)

SUPT.—22 So the messenger went, and came and shewed Da'vid all that Jo'ab had sent him for.

School.—23 And the messenger said unto Da'vid, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.

24 And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant U-ri'ah the Hit'tite is dead also.

25 Then Da'vid said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Jo'ab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.

26 And when the wife of U-ri'ah heard that U-ri'ah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

27 And when the mourning was past, Da'vid sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that Da'vid had done displeased the Lord.

1 And the Lord sent Na'than unto Da'vid. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:

3 But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

5 And Da'vid's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Na'than, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:

6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

7 And Na'than said to Da'vid, Thou art the man.

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22 So the messenger went, and came and showed David all that Joab had sent him for. 23 And the messenger said unto David, The men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entrance of the gate. 24 And the shooters shot at thy servants from off the wall; and some of the king's servants are dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also. 25 Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another; make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.

26 And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she made lamentation for her husband. 27 And when the mourning was past, David sent and took her home to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased Jehovah.

1 And Jehovah sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; 3 but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. 4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. 5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As Jehovah liveth, the man that hath done this is worthy to die: 6 and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Create in me a clean heart, O God. Psa. 51: 10.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**God condemns the guilty and forgives the penitent.**

TOPIC.—**Effectual reproof.**

OUTLINE.—**I. David's grievous fall. II. Bath-sheba becomes David's wife. III. David reproved.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1035.**

PLACE.—**Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—David prospered in his kingdom. During his enjoyment of a period of peace the desire came into his heart to build a permanent house as a dwelling-place for Jehovah, for he dwelt in a tabernacle. Through the prophet Nathan he was told that the Lord would not have him do it, but his son would be instructed to build the house of the Lord. After this David greatly enlarged the territory of Israel by his victories over the Philistines, the Syrians, the Moabites and the Ammonites. David's faithfulness to his friend Jonathan, who had been dead many years, is seen in his inquiry as to whether any of Jonathan's descendants were alive, that he might show them kindness. He found that a lame son, Mephibosheth, was alive, and he restored to him all the land that had belonged to Saul and had him eat at his table. Up to this time David's name was both unsullied and illustrious, but we are introduced to him in the present lesson in his terrible fall. This sad incident stands as a warning to all. In it we see man's liability to fall, God's faithfulness in giving reproof and his mercy in granting forgiveness. Psalm 51 should be read in connection with this lesson, for it has reference to this very period in the life of David.

COMMENTARY.—I. DAVID'S GRIEVOUS FALL (11: 1-21). **1-5.** When we contemplate the splendid character of David, and the glory of his many triumphs; when we survey at a glance his exaltation from a humble shepherd boy to the widely-honored king of Jehovah's people,

and think of his many unrivaled excellences of mind and heart, we are ready to wish that his life had closed before these crimes of adultery and blood-guiltiness had polluted his mighty soul and darkened his life history with an ineffaceable stain.—*Whedon.* The history here recorded may be regarded as a strong argument in support of the authenticity of the scriptures. The sacred biographer did not in any sense try to cover up David's sins, nor did he seek to shield him from blame. He tells the story with a simplicity and a candor that convince the reader of its truthfulness. A writer who would make a hero of David would speak of his sins in milder terms or would pass over them altogether. David was of mature age and must have known well the consequences in one's life and influence of such a course as he contemplated. He allowed his passions to run riot, and he was plunged into infamy. His sin shows that good men must remember their liability to fall, and must be constantly watchful lest they yield to temptation. Bath-sheba, who was partaker of his sin, did not exercise becoming prudence. She exposed herself to the view of David, and she later seems to have offered no resistance to his desires; thus she contributed to the downfall of both.

6-21. One sin led to another, as is usually the case. Uriah, the husband of Bath-sheba, was one of David's most faithful and capable warriors. So devoted was he that he would not leave the king's service in time of war to enjoy the comforts of his home, even when urged to do so by the king. David became desperate, for the death penalty, the punishment for adultery, was likely to be inflicted upon Bath-sheba and himself. Uriah must be put out of the way that David might take his wife for himself. He would not slay him, but he would give instructions to Joab, the general of his army, to place him where he would be almost certain to lose his life. He thus became guilty of shedding innocent blood to cover his own guilt. Uriah was slain in the battle, for Joab followed the directions given him by David, and thus apparently became in some degree involved with David in the crime of murder. Dr. Clarke says, in summing up the whole affair, "For my own part, I must say I pity David, I venerate Uriah, I detest Joab and I think meanly of Bath-sheba;" but while David was to be pitied, he deserved also to be strongly condemned; for of what greater sins could he have been guilty?

II. BATH-SHEBA BECOMES DAVID'S WIFE (11:22-27). **22. the messenger**—Joab sent a messenger from Rabbah, a city of the Ammonites, twenty-two miles east of the Jordan, to David with word regarding the war which he was waging. The main purpose, however, in sending the messenger was to inform David that Uriah was dead. **23. came out unto us**—Joab with his army was besieging Rabbah and the men of the city made a sally against Joab's army. **we were upon them**—The army of Israel drove their assailants back to the gate of the city. **24. shooters shot from off the wall**—Joab appears to have shown poor military ability in sending his men so close to the walls of the city that they could be reached by the arrows of archers on the walls. **Uriah....is dead**—Joab had so carefully obeyed the king's orders that Uriah fell, and special mention is made of his death by the messenger. **25. thus shalt thou say unto Joab**—This message was dictated by an abominable hypocrisy. He would thus affect sorrow for the fall of the noble Uriah, and seek to cover his own guilt in the matter.—*Whedon.* **one as well as another**—Joab was thus approved by David, though David knew that a plot had been laid by him and Joab to have Uriah slain.

26. mourned for her husband—How deeply Bath-sheba mourned for Uriah we can not know with certainty, but all the circumstances indicate that the mourning was mostly formal. Her infatuation had cost her her virtue and a noble husband. **27. when the mourning was past**—The usual period of mourning was seven days. In the case of prominent persons it was thirty days. The length of time that widows should mourn for their husbands is nowhere stated. **David sent....and she became his wife**—The guilty pair were acting contrary to all sense of propriety. They seemed to think their sin was not known and they would enjoy themselves in their new relation. **displeased the Lord**—David had not yet settled with God. This record shows God's mind regarding David's course. God's displeasure was about to find expression in so emphatic a way that David would keenly realize the enormity of his sins.

III. DAVID REPROVED (12:1-7). **1. the Lord sent Nathan**—Nathan was the prophet of the Lord to Israel. For a year David had been undisturbed in his sin by the prophet, but if his conscience had been slumbering it was now to be awakened. **two men in one city**—In the parable the men represented David and Uriah. **2. many flocks and herds**—A parable well suited to a pastoral people. **3. one little ewe lamb**—In striking contrast to the rich man's wealth. **with his children**—It was a pet lamb. The poor man had a wealth of affection for his small possession. **4. took the poor man's lamb**—The prophet was speaking a parable that most impressively showed the hatefulness of selfishness and injustice. **5. David's anger was greatly kindled**—He could readily see the wickedness of the rich man and was justly incensed at the greedy man. **as the Lord liveth**—A form of oath or strong affirmation. **6. shall restore the lamb fourfold**—The Jewish law required a fourfold restoration for a sheep that had been taken wrongfully (Exod. 22:1). David did not suspect that he was thus strongly condemning himself. The parable was having the designed effect. "It fastens on the essential guilt of David's sin; not its sensuality or its impurity, so much as its meanness and selfishness."—*Stanley.* **7. thou art the man**—All the guilt that David declared attached to the rich man in the story, rested upon himself. The prophet was fearless in his application of the truth, even if it involved the great king of Israel. This is an instance of the directness with which God deals with men. As Nathan proceeded with his account of David's sin, the king was conscience-smitten and confessed to the prophet, "I have sinned against the Lord." David's life was spared, but four of his sons died,—the first son of David and Bath-sheba, Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah. David found forgiveness, but the stain upon the page of his life's history was ineffaceable.

QUESTIONS.—Over what enemies did David's army triumph? Of what sins did David become guilty? How is his course a warning to us? How did God regard his acts? Whom did the Lord send to David? State the parable. What effect did the story have upon David? How did Nathan apply the parable?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. David's prosperity. (1) The Philistines, Syrians, Ammonites and Moabites defeated. (2) The territory of Israel enlarged. 2. David's desire to build a house for the Lord. 3. A message from the Lord by Nathan, the prophet. 4. David's prayer of thanksgiving. 5. The kindness shown by David to Mephibosheth. 6. A solemn warning is contained in this lesson.

II. THEME.—David's fall.

III. DAVID'S FORMER EXCELLENCES.—1. His simplicity and candor. 2. His humility. 3. His bravery. 4. His devotion to God and his people. 5. His strong religious nature. 6. His patience and compassion. 7. His great-heartedness. 8. His energy in behalf of his nation. 9. His literary ability.

IV. HIS SIN AND MORE SIN.—1. A man of mature years and judgment. 2. His family. 3. The temptation that came to him. (1) He looked. (2) He lusted. (3) He yielded to his desire. 4. Bath-sheba's imprudence and what resulted from it. 5. David's sin did not stop with adultery. 6. Uriah's patriotism. 7. The terrible plot against Uriah. 8. Advantage taken of Uriah's loyalty. 9. Bath-sheba became David's wife. 10. Deception and murder added to David's sin of adultery.

V. DAVID REPROVED.—1. The record that God was displeased with David's acts. 2. Nathan was a faithful prophet of the Lord. 3. The parable of the ewe lamb. (1) Its simplicity. (2) Its aptness. (3) David's committal of himself. 4. The forcefulness and directness of Nathan's, "Thou art the man." 5. The charge of Nathan and the punishment decreed. 6. David's acknowledgment of his guilt. 7. The death of four of David's sons. 8. Note Psa. 51.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**Effectual reproof.**

I. Revealed the man of sin.
II. Led to confession of sin.
III. Declared the effect of sin.

I. Revealed the man of sin. The moral and spiritual aim of Nathan's parable was to awaken in the king the general sense of outraged justice concerning his own conduct. David's sin was a breach of the commandment which guards human life, and was committed when God was prospering him in all his affairs, when his people were bravely risking their lives in defense of their country and after he had spent many years in fellowship with God. David's protracted labor of years had secured a compact kingdom with internal unity. Saul's family had been cared for. The government was organized and labor divided. The war against the Syrians was in the hands of a powerful force under a skilful general. David had leisure unknown in former years. In the exercise of his freedom and the abuse of his power, David disregarded the responsibilities of his office and fell from his moral elevation into the depths of sin to the verge of destruction. It was God's design that David's sin should be fully manifested to effect a perfect cure, therefore all his plans for concealment failed. David's endeavor to hide his transgression was a tacit acknowledgment of its disreputable character, beginning in lust and ending in murder. Nathan was not sent as a herald of vengeance, but to reprove and convince of sin. His parable touched upon the experience of David. He had known what it was to be poor. He knew what it was to possess and love the lambs. The wise prophet led David to pass unconscious verdict upon himself. The effect of the application of the parable is a remarkable illustration of the power of conscience. The force of truth came in the particular application of it. The wicked man upon the throne saw for the first time what his sin really involved. It was guilt calculated upon, persisted in, covered up by sophistry and self-excusing. He had accomplished the death of his faithful servant Uriah, a brave soldier, whom he had sent without warning to his doom, through the help of Joab, an able, but unscrupulous, general and a ready accomplice in David's sin. In that fatal letter to Joab David signed away his liberty and surrendered himself to his accomplice, who served him that he might gain power over him. David seemed to have lost sight of the one Witness of the whole transaction of his guilt. The most potent element in Nathan's utterance was the direct charge of God. His words contained an inquiry and a statement. It was a time of conviction, of probing and heart-searching.

II. Led to confession of sin. It became evident to David that his long-kept secret was known to his most influential and incorruptible subject and friend and that God was speaking directly to his conscience. The eye of conscience, turned in upon himself, gave fresh life to the old suppressed loyalty to righteousness and God, and as a consequence full confession came of his sin against God. The purpose of the parable was reached. He was self-convicted, self-condemned. His sense of sin was the beginning of his salvation. David saw himself as Nathan saw him and as God saw him. It was divine favor that sent Nathan. David's great sin was met and mastered by God's great grace. A vision of divine love melted the hardened heart. It was a rapid transition of feeling through which David passed from indignation at another's supposed sin to the acknowledgment of his own actual crime.

III. Declared the effect of sin. The change in David's moral condition had a pernicious influence ever after on his rule, in his court, on his private life and on the general prosperity of his kingdom. Loss of respect, loss of executive power, loss of influence was inevitable. His sin was the turning-point in his career, which was henceforth marked by a long series of calamities. Without giving the convicted king time to enlarge upon his confession, Nathan told of the retribution that was sure to come by the hand of God. He was to reap according to his sowing. Forgiveness established the restoration of favor and fellowship with God, which had been interrupted by sin, but its effects would be visited upon his family. T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The tragedy of sin. Sin is not the innocent and harmless thing that many are inclined to picture it. Some would pass it over as being nothing to alarm or cause uneasiness, and they pass on, taking no thought of its deadly character. Under the awakening of the Spirit one sees it in a different light. Robert Pollok speaks thus of it:

"So bad was sin!
So lost, so ruined, so depraved was man!—
Created first in God's own image fair!
Oh, cursed, cursed Sin! traitor to God,
And ruiner of man! mother of Woe,
And Death, and Hell,—wretched, yet seeking worse:
Polluted most, yet wallowing in the mire;
Most mad, yet drinking Frenzy's giddy cup;
Depth ever deepening, darkness darkening still;
Folly for wisdom, guilt for innocence;
Anguish for rapture, and for hope despair;
Destroyed, destroying; in tormenting pained;
Unawed by wrath; by mercy unreclaimed;
Thing most unsightly, most forlorn, most sad."

The blindness of sin. For nearly a year the sweet singer of Israel penned no psalms; his harp hung on the willows; his soul was as barren as a Sahara desert. Lust, adultery, hypocrisy and murder were charged to his account, yet his self-respect seemed unimpaired; his lack of communion with God seemed to give no occasion for alarm; his appalling sins seemed no cause for grief. It seems the greater the sin, the less the sense of sin. Agag, when he was ready to be hacked to pieces, concluded that the bitterness of death was past (1 Sam. 15:32). Polluted Babylon, the besom of destruction at her door, said, "I shall be a lady for ever" (Isa. 47:7). The rich fool sitting in the midst of his abundance with death rattling the door, said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19). "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12).

The fearless preacher. "Thou art the man" (ch. 12:7). Nathan before David; Elijah before Ahab; Daniel before Belshazzar; John the Baptist before Herod; Paul before Felix; John Knox at the court of Queen Mary; Savonarola before Lorenzo, The Magnificent; Bishop Latimer before Henry the Eighth; Martin Luther before the Diet of Worms; each is an example of the fearless preacher. During the Franco-German war one million German soldiers came into France but only one hundred thousand Frenchmen were killed. Nine Germans fired away for seven months and never killed a man, while the tenth fired but one effective shot. A wicked sailor was once standing near Whitefield while he was preaching at Plymouth. He was angry at the plain words of the preacher and had mentally resolved to knock him off the place where he stood. Suddenly Whitefield turned toward the sailor, looked him squarely in the face and cried out, "Sinner, thou art the man that crucified the Son of God." The wicked sailor wrote, "I felt the word of God sharper than a two-edged sword. I was at once convicted. My heart bursting, mine eyes gushing forth floods of tears, I dreaded the instant wrath of God, and expected that it would immediately fall upon me." This personal application of the truth resulted in his being converted and devoting himself to the ministry. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—God forgives those who repent and believe.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

David fell into sin
Uriah, wickedly slain
Nathan, a true prophet

David's fall. In teaching this lesson there should be made the impression that although a good man like David fell into sin, it is not necessary for Christians to fall away; and the warning should at the same time be given that unless we are watchful and prayerful, we shall fall into sin. As good a man as David was, he failed to watch and resist temptation and he sinned deeply. The lesson should include the thought that God forgives those who repent of their sins and believe. David had been resting on the flat roof of his house during the heat of the day, and arose toward evening and was looking about. The roof of an Eastern house is a very pleasant place to sit, walk or rest, and the people spend much of their time there. As David looked from where he was on the housetop, he saw a beautiful woman, and although he had several wives, he wanted her also for his wife. She had a husband named Uriah and David could not very well make her his wife while Uriah lived. David sinned in desiring to have another man's wife and he sinned in putting his desires into action.

Uriah was wickedly slain. We can scarcely think of David as being so wicked as to desire to have an innocent man slain, but when one turns from God by yielding to temptation, it is hard to tell where one will stop. Tell the story of Joab's fighting at Rabbah against the Ammonites. Uriah was there. He was a good soldier and a brave, true man. David sent for him. He wanted him slain, so he sent a letter by him to Joab, the leader of the army, to put Uriah in the most dangerous place, that he might be killed. It was wicked for David to do this and it was wicked for Joab to act with David in trying to put Uriah out of the way. Uriah lost his life in the battle. Word came to Jerusalem that he was slain, and his wife mourned for him or pretended to be sorry, and in a few days she became David's wife.

Nathan reproved David. We all feel sorry that David did such wicked things as these. The Lord was displeased also, and sent his true prophet to tell David about his sins. The Lord lets people know when they displease him. Tell the story of the little lamb that Nathan told David. It would be a very bad thing for a man who had large numbers of sheep and cattle to take a little pet lamb from a poor man who had only the one. David thought such a man ought to be put to death. He ought to give the poor man four sheep for the one he took. When Nathan told David he was the man, and then told him about all the sins he had committed, David felt very bad, and said, "I have sinned." David was punished for his sins. Note that he had one man slain, and four of his sons died under distressing circumstances. Tell how David repented and was forgiven.

LESSON XI

HOME READINGS.—Mon., June 7.—Blessedness of forgiveness.—Psa. 32. Tu.—Prayer for pardon.—Psa. 25: 1-11. Wed.—The goodness of Jehovah.—Psa. 25: 12-22. Th.—Penitence and pardon.—1 John 1: 5-2: 6. Fr.—Joy of pardon.—Luke 7: 36-50. Sat.—Pardon full and free.—Rom. 4: 1-9. Su.—Righteous living.—Eph. 4: 25-32.

The Blessedness of Forgiveness.—Psalm 32: 1-11.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verse, 5)

SUPT.—1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

School.—2 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Se'lah.

5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Se'lah.

6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

7 Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Se'lah.

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.

11 Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.
Whose sin is covered.
2 Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile.
3 When I kept silence, my bones wasted away
Through my groaning all the day long.
4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me:
My moisture was changed as with the drought of summer. [Selah
5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee,
And mine iniquity did I not hide:
I said, I will confess my transgressions unto Jehovah;
And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. [Selah
6 For this let every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found:
Surely when the great waters overflow they shall not reach unto him.
7 Thou art my hiding-place; thou wilt preserve me from trouble;
Thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance. [Selah
8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go:
I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee.
9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding;
Whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in.
Else they will not come near unto thee.
10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked;
But he that trusteth in Jehovah, lovingkindness shall compass him about.
11 Be glad in Jehovah, and rejoice, ye righteous;
And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Psa. 32: 1.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**Confession of sin and forgiveness bring relief.**

TOPIC.—**Doctrine and experience.**

OUTLINE.—**I. The joy of pardon. II. The pain of sin concealed. III. Relief in confession. IV. Instruction.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1034.**

PLACE.—**Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—This psalm has a direct connection with the lesson of last week, for it is generally agreed that it was written after David had obtained forgiveness for his great sins and had been fully restored to the divine favor. Psa. 51 was written as an expression of his deep and hearty repentance of his sins and as a prayer for forgiveness. These are two of the seven penitential psalms, the others being 6, 38, 102, 130, 143. David's humble confession of his great sin resulted in his restoration to the divine favor, and it also restored him to the confidence of those who read his life through. There can be no doubt that he wrote this psalm for use in the temple worship, and hence his repentance and confession were not only hearty, but were also made public. We can but deplore his terrible fall, but we are compelled to honor him for his position after conscience and the prophet Nathan had forced upon him a sense of the enormity of his sin. This psalm has been a great source of encouragement to souls whose sins have driven them almost to despair.

COMMENTARY.—I. THE JOY OF PARDON (vs. 1, 2). **1. blessed is he**—The original is expressive, "O the blessednesses," the plural being used to indicate the highest degree of blessedness. This blessedness David had experienced upon obtaining forgiveness, and only those who have felt the joy of pardon can understand what he here says. **transgression**—The violation of the law or the rights of others. Transgression means a going across or beyond proper boundaries. This is one of the terms used to designate sin. **forgiven**—A full, instantaneous, irreversible pardon of transgression turns the poor sinner's hell into heaven, and makes the heir of wrath a partaker in blessing. The word rendered "forgiven" is in the original "taken off," or "taken away," as a burden is lifted or a barrier removed.—*Spurgeon.* **sin**—This word means a

missing of the mark or a coming short. It indicates a failure to meet God's requirements. **covered**—This word is the same in its derivation as that which is translated "atonement." The precious blood of Christ covers the sins of the believer. Sin is something defiling, hideous, and through God's mercy it is covered so that he does not see it or remember it against the pardoned sinner any more forever. **2. the Lord imputeth not iniquity**—The Lord does not charge with sin any more those whom he has pardoned. They were guilty, but their sins are borne away, are covered and are no longer written down against them. "The words thus rendered [transgression, sin, iniquity] describe sin in different aspects, (1) as rebellion, or breaking away from God; (2) as wandering from the way, or missing the mark; (3) as depravity, or moral distortion. Forgiveness is also triply described, (1) as the taking away of a burden; (2) as covering, so that the foulness of sin no longer meets the eye of the judge and calls for punishment; (3) as the canceling of a debt, which is no longer reckoned against the offender."—*Cam. Bib.* **in whose spirit there is no guile**—There can be no forgiveness as long as there is a disposition to deceive one's self or the Lord. Sincerity is one of the primary conditions of pardon.

II. The pain of sin concealed (vs. 3, 4). **3. when I kept silence**—David had kept his terrible sins of adultery and murder as much to himself as possible for a year. Bath-sheba knew all and Joab knew about the death of Uriah. His sin was covered up from public gaze, but it was not hidden from himself nor from God. **my bones waxed old**—David's suffering from the pangs of conscience were intense. His trouble affected his physical health, so that his strength was giving away. **through my roaring all the day long**—His groaning consisted of moans and other signs of grief that found no expression in words. It was through the mercy of God that he could find no rest from his guilty conscience. He gave no sign of confession, but he gave oft-repeated expression to his sorrow and pain. **4. thy hand was heavy upon me**—God's hand upon his submissive, trusting child is an uplifting, comforting hand. It affords strength and courage for life's labors and pains. It is a protecting, providing hand. To David in his guilt it was a heavy hand, giving him unrest and sorrow unmixed with comfort. **my moisture is turned into the drought of summer**—A burning, feverish condition of the body existed or a burning desolation of soul. The drought of summer in Palestine is almost like desolation itself. The hills and valleys that in spring are beautifully clad with verdure are parched and barren in summer except where there is a supply of water. **selah**—This expression indicates a rest in the music and a change in the thought.

III. Relief in confession (vs. 5-7). **5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee**—Nathan, the prophet, was God's messenger to David, and he was led to confess the sins he had long kept buried in his own heart. The burden became so heavy, conviction became so deep, that he made his acknowledgment of guilt. He no longer tried to deceive himself or others. **mine iniquity have I not hid**—In this verse the psalmist uses the same words for sin that he did in the first two verses of the psalm. He disclosed his meanness, his selfishness, his injustice. **I said, I will confess**—Under the continual goadings of his conscience he came to the point where he decided to make his confession and carried out his determination. **thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin**—David declares with emphasis that it was the Lord that granted forgiveness. There appears here no interposition of priest. David came directly to the Lord with his broken, penitent heart, and he became at once assured that his sins were forgiven.

6. for this—Because David had received a signal victory and found immediate and complete relief from his burden of guilt, therefore all should be encouraged to come to God in sincerity and faith for needed help. **in a time when thou mayest be found**—It is plainly implied that the time will come when effective prayer will be impossible. This is a solemn warning not to put off the time of our seeking the Lord. **in the floods of great waters**—David had such confidence in God from his experience in answered prayer, that he was convinced that he would sustain his trusting children in the midst of the severest tests in life. **7. thou art my hiding place**—A marvelous change had come to David. He had been hiding from God, and his physical strength was giving away under the strain of deep conviction and his attempt to cover up his sin; but with the relief that had come to him from his burden's being lifted, he felt that he had in God a hiding-place, a place of refuge. **thou shalt preserve me from trouble**—Trouble shall do me no real harm when the Lord is with me, rather it shall bring me much benefit, like the file which clears away the rust, but does not destroy the metal.—*Spurgeon.* **thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance**—Just a little while before this he was "roaring all the day long" because of his awful burden of guilt, now he was surrounded on all sides with the music of victory.

IV. Instruction (vs. 8-11). **8. I will instruct thee**—The Lord is here speaking. He becomes the instructor of all those who choose to follow him. **I will counsel thee with mine eye upon thee** (*R. V.*)—There is a close intimacy between the Lord and those who belong to him. He notes every movement and with his eye directs them. **9. be ye not as the horse**—The animals here mentioned must be controlled by force. The children of God keep their eyes and ears open to know the course he would have them take. **else they will not come near unto thee** (*R. V.*)—The horse or the mule need the bit or bridle upon them that the master may control them. Otherwise they would be likely to run away beyond his reach. **10. many sorrows shall be to the wicked**—In the last two verses the psalmist contrasts the condition of the wicked to that of the righteous. He had experienced some of the sorrows of the wicked. **mercy shall compass him about**—He may meet the distresses incident to human life, but he is so protected by the mercy of the Lord that he is not greatly affected by them. **11. be glad in the Lord**—The genuine Christian has joy in the Lord. **shout for joy upright in heart**—Not only are the saints permitted to shout the praises of God, but they are directly exhorted to do so. David's "roaring" had evidently been changed into shouting.

QUESTIONS.—By whom was this psalm written? At what time and under what circumstances? Who are pronounced blessed? What three terms are used to indicate sin? What three words are used to express forgiveness? Why was David in deep distress of soul and body? How did he find relief? How does he show his trust in God? What contrast is drawn between the righteous and the wicked?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The psalm we have for our present study. (1) Its authorship. (2) Its date. (3) The circumstances under which it was written. (4) Its connection with Psa. 51. 2. Other penitential psalms. 3. The idea that this psalm gives us of David's disposition. 4. This psalm is an encouragement to all penitent sinners. 5. The doctrine and experience of salvation from sin. 6. The benefit to the world of clear, positive testimony to the power of God to save from sin.

II. THEME.—Deliverance from sin.

III. THE JOYS OF SALVATION.—1. The degree of blessedness enjoyed by the saved. 2. The three words used to express sin. 3. The three terms expressive of pardon. 4. No language can adequately express the meaning of salvation. 5. The gladness of those who have been delivered from sin. 6. The privilege of the righteous to shout. 7. The completeness of salvation.

IV. SIN UNCONFESSED.—1. David's long concealment of his guilt. 2. The depth to which he fell. 3. The office of conscience. 4. The pain he experienced from his unconfessed sin. 5. His inability to ease his conscience. 6. The various expressions employed to indicate his trouble. 7. David's load was heavy. 8. What it would have meant if he had not confessed. 9. Satan's efforts to keep sinners from confessing.

V. SIN CONFESSED.—1. What it meant for David to make his confession. (1) His previous record. (2) His high position in the nation. (3) It meant restoration to the divine favor. 2. His decision to confess. 3. His confession was public. 4. His confession led to forgiveness. 5. The confidence David had in God after his restoration. 6. The contrast between his life while hiding his sin and after he had confessed. 7. The relief that follows hearty confession.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**Doctrine and experience.**

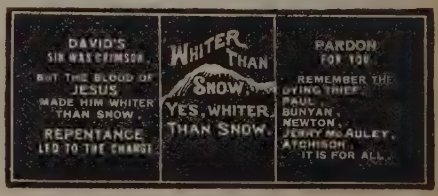
I. A penitent sinner forgiven.
II. A teacher to the impenitent.

I. A penitent sinner forgiven. This psalm is a grateful rehearsal of the blessedness of divine forgiveness, illustrated from David's personal experience. It is doctrine explaining facts, while facts enforce the doctrine. It tells of sins committed, concealed, rankling within, confessed and put away. David declared how God met the necessity of his case by removing guilt and renovating character. The fact and the consciousness of forgiveness brought comfort to his soul. Man the sinner and God the Savior are the great themes of this psalm. Under painful consciousness of his guilt, David had lived under a constant depression, bearing a secret, silent burden, a rebel of perverse inclination, self-willed and spiritually deformed, in revolt missing the mark, his life marred by crookedness and deformity. Such was the wretchedness which his sin and silence concerning it entailed upon him. His weird picture is a realistic illustration of the misery of the unrepentant. The absence of inward peace, hitherto possessed, deprived David of that element which sweetened life's sorrow and smoothed its roughness. He had gloom, unrest and a dread of ill. He was robbed of his trust in God until he recognized the radical nature of sin. Then he had a whole catalogue of joyful consequences following his confession. From an abject penitent, moaning day and night under God's heavy hand, David was transformed into a joyful singer of God's goodness, declaring the blessedness of deliverance from remorse and the dreadful pangs of an accusing conscience to a close clinging to God in perfect trust. David proclaimed the mastery and removal of his sin by God's grace, the emancipation from a crushing load, the interment of the evil thing with his wickedness no longer chargeable to him. An accusing conscience was exchanged for the peace of God, his agonizing silence to inexpressible song. He exulted in the blessedness which his forgiveness had secured to him. His words were a burst of thankful rapture. The change in himself was real, the transition marvelous. It was to him a real change from darkness to light.

II. A teacher to the impenitent. David revealed the path which led to divine forgiveness. He made open confession of his sin and ceased from excuses and palliations. His confession was minute and unreserved. His conscious sense of sin was accompanied with self-abasement, self-condemnation, self-abhorrence. He defined wickedness as the absence of a trust in God, leaving the soul exposed to all that is depraved and vicious, with no defense or safeguard, no motive to animate to duty or to warn from iniquity. All sin he counted as a departure from God and that formed its deepest and darkest characteristic. He termed it the source of all corruption and trouble, declaring that it dissolves the union and communion of the soul with God and leads to apostasy. It is manifest in a divergence from the straight line of righteousness into paths that are wrong. David's comfort was not found in his penitence, but in the promises of God. His confession was the breaking down of the barrier raised by impenitence and unbelief. When sin was comprehended in all its evil, God the Redeemer began its cure. It is the work of God in the government of the world to repair the evil which sin has wrought. Evil in its outward aspect was not changed, but to David's soul its spiritual relation was reversed. Out of his past and present experience David counseled others that they should not refuse submission until they were chastened into it. His own experience taught him to be pitiful. His testimony bore counsel and warning. His sinful silence had wrought injury to his soul, had wronged others and offended the goodness of God. Forgiveness had put away the wrath of God, the curse of the law and the fear of death. In God he found a perpetual protector and friend. Peace, freedom and courage were natural blessings coming from divine guidance. The enjoyment of fellowship combined with instruction is the promise to those who will be guided by God's eye, a promise rich with encouragement and consolation. Those who learn the language of the eye will master the language of the soul.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The threefold nature of sin. 1. Transgression. separation, rending apart, departure. Sin is a departure from God. It is the figure of a colt breaking away from restraint. The cords have been snapped. The yoke has been thrown aside. Man is a rebel and a deserter. 2. Sin, missing the mark. A deflection from the correct line of life. Man has chosen his own end. He has missed the mark. 3. Iniquity, that which is twisted or distorted. The standard of duty is a straight line. Man has become twisted from that line. With respect to God sin is separation and rebellion; with respect to us it is missing the mark; with respect to the law of righteousness it is something twisted or distorted.

The threefold nature of forgiveness. 1. Forgiven, the load lifted and borne away. 2. Covered, to cover over, to hide from sight. 3. Not imputed, not counted, not reckoned. David had separated himself from God; he had missed the mark of purity; he had warped himself from righteousness. He found forgiveness for his transgression; covering for his sin; and no reckoning made of his iniquity. What David found, you may find.

The threefold condition of deliverance. 1. Conviction (v. 4). Like a flash of lightning Nathan's solemn accusation opens David's blinded eyes until he writhes under the lash of an aroused conscience and is tortured with the memory of his sins. An ancient writer tells of a woman who went mad on seeing herself in a looking-glass, as she had not before any idea of her deformity. A sudden discovery of all our moral deformity might produce the same effect, but God graciously permits just enough to give us a piercing sense of sin and still leave room for hope in his mercy. 2. Acknowledgment (v. 5). "I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" (Psa. 51:3, 4). 3. Confession. Confession should be to those whom the sin has injured, and should be as widely known as the sin. David taught men to sin by his example and now teaches them repentance in the same way.

The threefold results of deliverance. 1. Communion (v. 6). Holy characters are formed by prayer. If David had been praying that fatal evening, the floods of great waters would not have gone over him. 2. Security (v. 7). Adam hid from God; David hides in God. A bank building recently burned in St. Louis with over a million dollars in currency in the vaults, but the money was unharmed. Hidden away in Christ, we are safe. 3. Guidance (v. 8). David found by bitter experience that life's pathway was beset with slippery places. The pits of miry clay were too numerous for him to trust longer his own sight. So he forsakes the stubborn spirit of the mule and the fractious spirit of the horse and yields himself up to divine guidance.

The doxology. "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart" (v. 11). When Charles Wesley was seeking a definite Christian experience, he met a Moravian minister, to whom he said, "Is it really necessary that I should openly confess Christ?" The good man said, "If you have a thousand tongues, use them all in telling of your Savior." He found peace and wrote the hymn, "Oh, for a Thousand Tongues," which is sung around the world. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—There is joy in being forgiven.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

GOD HATES SIN

David { Covering / Confessing } His sins

THE JOY OF BEING FORGIVEN

God's hatred of sin. Let the class tell you their idea of what sin is. They will be likely to tell some things that others have done that are wrong. Recall the account of the sin of Adam and Eve and their punishment. Mention may be made of the flood and why it was sent. Note other Bible instances of how God punished those who had sinned. God is displeased with sin wherever it is found. Leave the impression upon the minds of the children that God knows all our thoughts, words and acts. He knew that Cain had killed his brother, but Cain tried to have it appear that he knew nothing about Abel.

David tried to cover his sin. The children may be able to tell the story of some boy who did a naughty thing and kept it from his father and mother. If they can not, tell of the boy who broke a beautiful vase in his mother's parlor and did not tell her. When she found it broken, she thought the cat must have knocked it off the stand. The boy went to bed at night, but he was afraid to go to sleep until he called his mother and confessed what he had done. For a year David kept his sin covered and all this time he was greatly distressed. Read the verses that tell how he felt. His conscience kept telling him that he ought to confess, but he would not do it, because he did not wish to have it known that he had done such wicked things. This same spirit is in people to-day. Satan tries to encourage the sinful to cover up their sins, but God encourages them to confess and find relief.

Confessing sin. At last David decided to confess. The prophet Nathan had told him the story of the pet lamb, as we read it last week, and had told him that he was the guilty man. He confessed the terribly wicked things he had done, and it was not long after this until he had peace and was happy again. This psalm was written to tell how he came to be forgiven. Although David was king, he could not be right with God without confessing his sins. This psalm was to be used in the temple worship, so his confession was public. God will forgive us when we confess our sins, turn away from them and trust him.

The joy of being forgiven. Have any of the children in the class been converted? If they have, let them tell about it. They were happy when they had confessed their sins to God and asked to be forgiven. Note how different David felt after he was forgiven from the way he felt while he was covering his sins. We have seen children and grown people clapping their hands, and have heard them praising the Lord, with tears of joy running down their faces, because they knew their sins were all taken away. David said it was right for those who are saved to shout. Such persons are greatly blessed. The burden of sin is gone.

LESSON XII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., June 14.—A prayer for the tempted.—Psa. 141. Tu.—Overthrow of the wicked.—Psa. 10. Wed.—Warning against the tempter.—Prov. 1: 7-19. Th.—Resisting temptation.—James 1: 12-18. Fr.—Peril of drink.—Prov. 23: 29-35. Sat.—Woes upon the evil-doer.—Hab. 2: 9-16. Su.—Separation enjoined.—2 Cor. 6: 11-18.

A Prayer for the Tempted—Temperance Lesson.—Psalm 141: 1-10.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 3, 4)

SUPT.—1 Lord, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

School.—2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

3 Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

4 Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

5 Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.

6 When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.

7 Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.

8 But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

9 Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.

10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 Jehovah, I have called upon thee;
make haste unto me:
Give ear unto my voice, when I call unto thee.
2 Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee;
The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.
3 Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth;
Keep the door of my lips.
4 Incline not my heart to any evil thing,
To practise deeds of wickedness
With men that work iniquity:
And let me not eat of their dainties.
5 Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness;
And let him reprove me, it shall be as oil upon the head;
Let not my head refuse it:
For even in their wickedness shall my prayer continue.
6 Their judges are thrown down by the sides of the rock;
And they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.
7 As when one ploweth and cleaveth the earth,
Our bones are scattered at the mouth of Sheol.
8 For mine eyes are unto thee, O Jehovah the Lord:
In thee do I take refuge; leave not my soul destitute.
9 Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me,
And from the gins of the workers of iniquity.
10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
Whilst that I withal escape.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me. Psa. 141: 9.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The tempted find relief in prayer.**

TOPIC.—**Comprehensive prayer.**

OUTLINE.—**I. A longing to have prayer heard. II. Petitions for deliverance from temptation.**

TIME.—**This psalm may have been written about B. C. 1060.**

PLACE.—**Perhaps at Gath.**

INTRODUCTION.—The title of this psalm ascribes it to David, and there is no good reason to suppose it was not written by him. It seems probable that it has reference to his sojourn in Gath, among the Philistines, after he had escaped from Saul, having spared his life at Hachilah. The psalm is full of expressions referring to distresses which affected the writer, and breathes an air of confidence in God. There is a pathetic earnestness in the petitions that indicate the close intimacy of the writer with God. "Few psalms in so small a compass crowd together so many gems of precious and holy truth."—Bouchier. The psalmist cries for acceptance in prayer (vs. 1, 2); then he begs to be kept as to his speech, preserved in heart and deed, and delivered from every sort of fellowship with the ungodly. He prefers to be rebuked by the gracious rather than to be flattered by the wicked, and consoles himself by the confident assurance that he will one day be understood by the godly party, and made to be a comfort to them (vs. 3-6). In the last verses the slandered saint represents the condition of the persecuted church, looks away to God and pleads for rescue from his cruel enemies, and for the punishment of his oppressors.—Spurgeon. There are several portions of the lesson that are capable of temperance application.

COMMENTARY.—I. A LONGING TO HAVE PRAYER HEARD (vs. 1, 2). **1. Lord**—Jehovah. The psalmist was sorely in need of help and he made his appeal to the ever-living, almighty God. It is supposed by some that he was fleeing from Saul into the land of the Philistines, where he had been in flight once before. "His second visit to Gath was a final and hazardous resort, exposed, as the history shows, to the jealousy of the Philistine nobility on the one hand and the robber tribes of the desert on the other. He had to pass only a few miles eastward to come within Saul's dominions, and meet a stronger and a deadlier foe, to escape whom he had accepted this desperate alternative."—*Whedon.* **I cry unto thee**—He makes his plea personally. He was the one in distress, and for himself he asks help. **make haste unto me**—There is directness in the expressions, "unto thee," and "unto me." A heart that sends forth such a cry in sincerity is sure to receive a fitting response. The plea for haste shows the urgency of the

case. **give ear unto my voice**—The petitioner was a believer in prayer. He was asking with the expectation of receiving. **when I cry unto thee**—Twice in this verse he makes use of the words, "I cry unto thee." "Our prayer and God's mercy are like two buckets in a well; while the one ascends, the other descends."—*Hopkins.*

2. let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense—The psalmist carefully and thoughtfully makes his petition. The figure is that of preparing the incense which was to be burned in the tabernacle. David desired to "set forth" his prayer before the Lord, that it might be accepted, and have an answer. **lifting up of my hands**—Lifting up the hands is a token of earnest desire. It also indicates acquiescence in the will of God. "Prayer is sometimes presented without words by the very motions of our bodies. Bended knees and lifted hands are the tokens of earnest, expectant prayer."—*Spurgeon.* **as the evening sacrifice**—The evening sacrifice was spoken of as a meat-offering. It was a constant memorial of God's presence with his people and his acceptance of their sacrifices. "The psalmist appears to have been at this time at a distance from the sanctuary; and therefore could not perform the divine worship in the way prescribed by the law. What could he do? Why, as he could not worship according to the letter of the law, he would worship God according to the spirit. Then prayer is accepted in the place of incense, and the lifting up of his hands in gratitude and self-dedication to God is accepted in the place of the evening sacrifice."—*Clarke.*

II. PETITIONS FOR DELIVERANCE FROM TEMPTATION (vs. 3-10). **3. set a watch....before my mouth**—The psalmist was impressed with the danger of saying unwise or evil things, and realized that it required watchfulness to make a right use of the power of speech. The figure here used is a strong one. As a soldier is placed at a door or gate to keep in any who had no right to go out, so the petitioner would have the Lord act as guard over his lips that no wrong word should proceed from them. Falsehood, exaggeration, evil-speaking, foolish talking, cruel words, unkind and uncharitable remarks should not be allowed to escape the lips. "Nature having made my lips to be a door to my words, let grace keep that door, that no word may be suffered to go out which may any way tend to the dishonor of God, or the hurt of others."—*Henry.* **4. incline not my heart to any evil thing**—The prayer is now for the right disposition of heart. The psalmist had just prayed that his words might be guarded, and now he asks that his heart might not be inclined to any wrong course. If the heart was rightly disposed, the words would tend to be right also. **to practise wicked works**—He was surrounded by evil men and he prayed to be kept from falling into their ways. **with men that work iniquity**—The influence of one man over another is here recognized. Evil associations have resulted in the ruin of untold numbers of men and women, young and old, and especially the young. One can not from choice associate with workers of iniquity without being corrupted. A great reason that myriads are being drawn into the awful current of alcoholism is that people are led by evil companions to take strong drink, being assured by them that there is no harm at all in it. The psalmist saw the danger of being drawn into sin, hence he offered this prayer. **let me not eat of their dainties**—Neither at their idol feasts nor as a guest at their social entertainments; thus tacitly condemning their practises.—*Whedon.*

5. let the righteous smite me—The psalmist prefers to be beaten or hammered, as the Hebrew signifies, by the righteous, rather than to feast with the wicked. The thought appears to be that reproof from the righteous, which is often painful, is far better than the flattery of the workers of iniquity. **an excellent oil**—Oil was considered as healing and refreshing. **shall not break my head**—It will be so far from breaking the head that it will strengthen and gladden the soul. The rebuke that is administered in love is of inestimable value to the one reproved. **in their calamities**—That is, if ever they who are my reprovers fall into calamity, though they may think they provoked me so by reproving me, that they have lost my love, and have cast themselves out of my prayers, yet I will pray for them with all my heart, as their matter shall require.—*Caryl.* **6. when their judges are overthrown**—This may have reference to the incident at Hachilah, when David approached Saul in the camp there and took his spear and cruse of water; then, having gone some distance away, talked kindly to him. David spared Saul's life there, and henceforth Saul did not seek to kill David.

7. our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth—The figure is that of a burial place which has been dug up or otherwise disturbed, and the bones are scattered all about. This was a representation of the condition of the Israelitish nation under the faulty rule of Saul in his later years. His conduct produced discord within the nation, and his weakness permitted outside enemies to prey upon it. This is a striking picture of the ruin caused by the liquor traffic. **8. mine eyes are unto thee**—The outward conditions might be unfavorable and deplorable, yet there was help in God; therefore the psalmist fixed his eyes upon him in earnest supplication. **in thee is my trust**—His faith in God was steady and strong. **leave not my soul destitute**—There is no other destitution that can compare with soul destitution.

9. keep me from the snares—This prayer is appropriate for all to pray. Satan has snares and pitfalls laid for all, and we are in danger of being taken in them. Snares and gins are hidden and the unsuspecting victims fall into them unawares. The saloon, the wine-room and the party where wine is served are snares, but they are more or less open and exposed to view, and may be shunned; but the personal friend who offers wine to another in the home is consciously or unconsciously working for the downfall of the tempted person. **10. let the wicked fall into their own nets**—The wicked shall fall into their own nets. It has been the case again and again, that those who have laid their plans to bring others into trouble have fallen into trouble themselves. No one can lead others astray without suffering for it.

QUESTIONS.—Who wrote this psalm? Under what circumstances was it written? What shows the earnestness of the prayer? What does the lifting up of the hands to God signify? What is said about carefulness in speech? What is the value of reproof? What petitions in the psalm are suited to those who are tempted? What portions of the lesson have a bearing upon temperance? What is liable to come to those who try to cause others to fall?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The connection between this lesson and the previous one. (1) The same author. (2) This shows the author in distress, the other shouting the victory. (3) This one is a prayer, the other a song of deliverance. 2. Circumstances under which the psalm of the present lesson may have been written. 3. The trials and testings in the life of David. 4. The applicability of prayer to present conditions. 5. This psalm and the temperance question.

II. THEME.—Seeking help from God.

III. HELP NEEDED.—1. The enemies that would keep one from taking the right course in life and pursuing it to the end. 2. The inability of man unaided to cope with these enemies. 3. Instances of brilliant men who have fallen a prey to the destroyer. 4. Help needed (1) in spiritual matters, (2) in temporal affairs. 5. Man's destitution without the grace of God.

IV. THE SOURCE OF HELP.—1. The first expression in this psalm. 2. God's ability to give assistance. (1) His wisdom. (2) His power in the material realm and in the spiritual. (3) His tender love. 3. God's regard for his creatures. 4. He has help for all. 5. The place of reproof in God's plan. 6. Help for the drunkard. 7. Help for the temperance worker.

V. HELP RECEIVED THROUGH PRAYER.—1. David's confidence that God hears prayer. 2. Earnestness in prayer. 3. Sincerity in prayer. 4. Submission and prayer. 5. Persistency in prayer. 6. Prayer and faith. 7. Encouragements to prayer. 8. Examples in the scriptures of answers to prayer. 9. The benefits of prayer.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**Comprehensive prayer.**

I. Contemplates human insufficiency.
II. Invokes the divine guardianship.

I. Contemplates human insufficiency. In this psalm we have David's prayer expressing his dependence, his desire, his trust. With him prayer was more than a petition. It was the going up of the whole soul toward God, confessing need and utter dependence upon divine grace. He pleaded that prayer might be with him a settled institution. The psalm seems to be his cry under great temptation, not so much from persecution as from seducing favors. The more hopeless the state of things seemed, the more steadfastly was his gaze fixed on God. The more emphatic his confession, the more confidently ascended his prayer. The psalmist felt he could not trust himself to examine, criticize or qualify his own speech, especially in times of excitement. He expressed a deep sense of the connection between circumstances and feeling, and a deep sense of the control God can have of the feelings through the mastery of circumstances. To him prayer was a better defense against persecutions than retaliation. It was also David's safeguard against the sweets of sin. Prayer was therefore of the essential nature of a true sacrifice, an appeal to God going from man's spirit to the divine Spirit, symbolized by the incense or slain lamb. It implies for the time, at least, being freed from earthly entanglements. It is leaving the baser self, the carrying of the sublimer self into the presence of God. Surroundings may not immediately change, but the soul does. The prayer of faith is the victory that overcomes the world within and without, for it forces its way into God's light and brings the intercessor divine strength. David was as earnest for God's grace within, as for his favor toward him in the events of life. Beginning and ending the day with God was his security against his human frailty.

II. Invokes the divine guardianship. This psalm is an invocation for divine attention to human needs, for complete guardianship in word and deed, for a readiness to receive righteous reproof, for the maintenance of a devout and believing soul in the midst of enemies and for ultimate deliverance from them all. In asking God to set a sentinel at the door of his lips, the psalmist does but in a figure ask God to give him quietness and self-control so that he may be able to judge the wisdom of what he was moved to speak. He would then become his own sentinel in the possession of that most valuable power of self-criticism. The invaluable blessing of strength of will is only won by diligent self-restraint and watchful self-recollection, but it may be sapped and wasted by unguarded and multitudinous speech. David sought God's special grace alone as his conqueror over the common sin of unguarded speech. Prayer may be well directed in gaining power over the tongue. The tongue is never harder to be tamed than when the individual is suffering at the hands of others. In the regulation of the tongue there is much contemplated. There are the laws of prudence, of purity, of veracity, of kindness, of utility, of piety. The psalmist included all when he prayed that he might not commit himself by rash or unguarded speech. He prayed again that he might have faithful reprovers. In them he recognized the correction of man to be in truth the guidance of God. He believed the docile reception of rebuke might save him from much greater sorrow that otherwise might come upon him. He believed it would result in an improvement of conduct and enlargement of usefulness for which he would have reason to praise God. He recognized a righteous reprover as one who felt deeply the peril of sin, who loved the soul of his fellow man and to whom the honor of God was most desired. For such the psalmist prayed and such he loved. By his upward look to God the psalmist kept renewed and sought divine favor for others. David identified himself with past generations of God's people. He was filled with compassion for the human family. He saw men in their littleness as creatures of a few fleeting years. He saw them in their greatness as men trusting in the living God amid all the changing scenes of life. He saw the wicked as those distinct from the people of God in their studied efforts to overthrow the work of divine grace in the souls of men. David's power in prayer, his habit of trust and the grace of God brought him repose. By inward triumph he was able to honor God in his outward career and was helpful to his nation.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

"Lead us not into temptation." A long trial was coming to a close in a county seat in Pennsylvania some years ago. It had been one of the longest trials ever held in the state up to that time, and had been full of complications. The judge who presided had taken a dram to stimulate him after the tiresome strain of the case, and had given the jury a similar privilege, to put them in good humor. The verdict was rendered "guilty." The criminal, only twenty years of age, was asked if he had anything to say. The young man rose to his feet and looking around the room, said, "I am guilty of the charge. I am everything the judge says I am—gambler, forger and a heavy drinker. I am glad the judge has granted me this privilege of speaking. I see some of my old chums here, and what I say may do them a little good—may keep them from stumbling over the rocks that ruined me." He turned toward the audience and addressing a man sitting near the door, said, "Dr. Pickets, I took my first lesson in gambling from you! You said there was no harm if I did not go in 'too heavy.' I went in 'too heavy,' it seems." The boy laughed nervously, while the doctor flushed crimson. "I took my first lesson in forging from you, Mr. Wyatt." One of the jurors started as if shot, and dropped his head in shame. "I took my first drink of brandy from a lady who serves drinks that sting." A lady in the audience stirred uneasily in her chair. Four months after the trial, the judge received the following letter from the young man: "Judge, I've tried to escape, and am writing this from the hospital ward. I was not quite brave enough to bear the thought that I must pass twenty years in this tomb. I much prefer the one I am about to enter,—the grave. I feel sure that if you had been sober the last day of my trial, my sentence would not have been for twenty long years. I tried to escape, and the guards shot me; the doctors say I can not recover; so you see my term will soon end. Be careful of Clarence. It is pretty hard for young men to resist the temptations that are sanctioned by law, and patronized by those in civil power. Be careful of Clarence; boys follow where men lead, and to be or do like some men is the highest ambition boys have. I followed the wrong kind of examples, but can not die without sending you this parting message: Be careful of Clarence." Clarence was the judge's son. The message of that letter led the judge into a better life and made him an ardent teetotaler. How pertinent is the prayer, "Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me" (Golden Text).

The devil's gin-mill. "Professor Ely says that dynamite explosions are 'a local manifestation of an international devil.' Gin-mills are manifestations of a local devil, compared with which dynamite and dynamiters are as infant's breathings when weighed in the scale with a first-class cyclone. Some say 'a well-regulated license law will hold them in check.' Yes, just the same as a 'well-regulated' red-hot iron shoved into a powder-magazine would hold it in check." A Kentucky paper says, "Whisky is the cause of nearly all crime, disorder and misery. Strike it out, and strikes will cease; tramp it out, and tramps will be few; murder it, and murders will cease; stab it to the heart, and hearts will no longer be stabbed; put an everlasting end to the mean thing, and meanness will be the exception, instead of the rule." G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—We should ask the Lord every day to keep us from evil.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

THE PSALMS

Asking for } Help from God
Receiving }

The psalms. Give the class a brief talk about the Book of Psalms. Show from your Bible how large the book is. Note the length of Psa. 119 and state that each division of that psalm is named after a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Show the class Psa. 117, reading it through. The psalms are Hebrew poetry and were written to be sung in the temple service, as we sing hymns in church. The writer of many of the psalms was David, about whom we have been studying for several weeks. Some of these psalms tell of the troubles he passed through and the deliverances that came to him. The one which we study to-day tells about his looking for help from trouble, probably that which came upon him from Saul.

Asking for help. Refer to the song, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," and notice what it says about taking our trials, troubles and temptations to the Lord in prayer. There are none of us who do not need help from the Lord. The psalmist desired to have his prayer heard and answered. Note the different things he asked for in this prayer. He desired help so that he would not speak any words that were not right. He asked the Lord to set a guard before his mouth. This is an important lesson. He desired also to be kept from doing evil and to be saved from wicked associates. Here is a lesson upon the evils of bad company. David realized that there were those who wished to catch him to destroy him and he prayed to be kept from the snares which were laid for him. Let the class tell of the different kinds of traps of which they know. Tell about the traps that Satan sets to catch boys and girls. The motion picture show, the theater, the dance, the saloon, the cigarette and the Sunday excursion are some of these traps.

Receiving help from the Lord. A boy was left an orphan. His father had died a drunkard, and then his mother came to her death-bed. She talked with her son and warned him against liquor. After her death he seemed to forget her words and began to smoke and drink. He tried to find a job, but men did not wish to employ a boy who drank or smoked. He remembered his mother's words and resolved to be good. He asked the Lord to save him from his sins, and he did. He then got a good position. A poor Japanese boy was traveling on foot a long distance in America to go to a Christian school. He was in a desert place and had nothing to eat. He prayed to the Lord for food and believed he would receive it. In a little while a band of Indians came along and stopped near him to eat, and one of them brought him a good meal. Recall from the scriptures a number of instances of answers to prayer. The Lord hears the prayers of those who pray to him in sincerity and faith. He loves to have us call upon him.

LESSON XIII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., June 21.—Saul rejected by the Lord.—1 Sam. 15: 10-23. Tu.—David anointed king.—1 Sam. 16: 4-13. Wed.—David and Goliath.—1 Sam. 17: 38-51. Th.—Friendship of David and Jonathan.—1 Sam. 20: 32-42. Fr.—David king over Judah and Israel.—2 Sam. 2: 1-7; 5: 1-5. Sat.—David brings the ark to Jerusalem.—2 Sam. 6: 12-15; Psa. 24. Su.—The blessedness of forgiveness.—Psa. 32.

David, the Shepherd of Israel—Review.—Psalm 78: 65-72.

[A reading lesson only.]

SUPT.—65 Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.

SCHOL.—66 And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.

67 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Jo'seph, and chose not the tribe of E'phra-im:

68 But chose the tribe of Ju'dah, the mount Zi'on which he loved.

69 And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever.

70 He chose Da'vid also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:

71 From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Ja'cob his people, and Is'ra-el his inheritance.

72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.

SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **SCHOL.—I will feed my flock. Ezek. 34: 15.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord graciously leads those who are willing to follow him.**

TOPIC.—**A change of kingship.**

INTRODUCTION.—Although Saul had displeased the Lord and had failed to measure up to the standard that the Lord had set up for the kings of Israel to reach, his life was spared and he continued in his office for many years. In the meantime a youth of another family comes into prominence in being anointed for the kingship of Israel at God's command. David becomes the main subject of our study during this quarter.

SUMMARY.—Lesson I. Topic: The first Easter day. Place: Jerusalem. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion. The women sought his body in the tomb to embalm it, but did not find it. They were informed by the angel at the tomb that Christ had risen. They went to tell the disciples and met Jesus. He made an appointment to meet them in Galilee. The women were disappointed at first, but later were filled with great joy because of the assurance that their Lord was alive.

II. Topic: Divine sovereignty. Places: Ramah; Bethlehem. The Lord sent Samuel, the prophet, to Bethlehem to anoint one of Jesse's sons king of Israel in the place of Saul. David, the youngest son, was anointed, being called in from the field where he was caring for his father's sheep. He was later called to Saul's court to play on the harp to quiet him, for he was troubled with an evil spirit. Saul was unconsciously giving David entrance into the court where later he would be in complete control. David's integrity, bravery, devotion and ability impressed Saul favorably.

III. Topic: Divine fellowship. Place: Palestine. As David was a shepherd, it was natural for him to present the life of the godly under the figure of a sheep in relation to the shepherd. The great Shepherd, the Father, Jehovah, provides for his sheep, his people; he protects them; he guides them; he comforts them. This psalm presents a true and striking picture of Oriental life. Amid surroundings where dangers abound the shepherd guards and protects his sheep. He does more than that, for he leads them to places where they have an abundance of food and where they find water. And besides safety and plenty they have true rest. This illustrates God's care for his children.

IV. Topic: Faith demonstrated. Place: The battle was fought in the valley of Elah. The armies of the Israelites and of the Philistines were arrayed against each other. Goliath, of the Philistine army, defied any warrior of Israel for forty days. At last David appeared and offered to meet him in battle. He was permitted to do so, and laid Goliath low with his sling and stone. Eliab, an older brother of David's, was not pleased to have David come to the camp and make himself prominent, and he would have sent him away if he had had his way. The Lord had a place for David, however, and a work for him to do.

V. Topic: Attempted violence. Places: Gibeah; Ramah. Jonathan, Saul's son, became a devoted friend to David. Saul became jealous of David because of the honor the people placed upon him. As David was playing before him to quiet him when one of his mad fits was upon him, he hurled his javelin at David in an effort to take his life. David made his escape. Saul heard that David was at Naioth and he sent messengers thither to take him. When they saw the prophets prophesying they also prophesied. Saul heard of it and sent other messengers, who also prophesied when they came near to Naioth. He sent messengers the third time and they, too, prophesied. Later Saul himself went to Naioth and he prophesied, so that people said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

VI. Topic: True friendship. Place: Gibeah. David and Jonathan made a solemn covenant to be mutual friends. Jonathan promised to protect David as well as he could, and David pledged to be a friend to him. Jonathan made a plea for David before his father, but it was in vain, so he warned David to flee for his life. Their farewell was affecting.

VII. Topic: A sinner condemned. Place: Hachilah. So eager was Saul to take David's life, that he went in search of him with an army David had already spared Saul's life in the cave of Engedi; and he went into Saul's camp at Hachilah where he could easily have slain him, but he had no desire to do such a thing. He talked with Saul, and Saul confessed his sin and promised not to injure David. David believed that Saul meant what he said at the time

he said it; but he knew him well enough not to place himself in Saul's power, for he could not tell when the evil spirit would gain control of him again.

VIII. Topic: Fidelity rewarded. Place: Hebron. Saul and three of his sons, including Jonathan were slain in battle at Mount Gilboa. David was divinely directed to go to Hebron to be anointed king of Judah. After reigning over this tribe for seven and a half years, he was again anointed, this time being chosen and appointed king over all Israel. He removed his capital to Jerusalem. Saul's son Ish-bosheth was accepted for a time as king over the northern tribes, but at his death the people were willing to accept David as king.

IX. Topic: A nation seeking God. Places: Kirjath-jearim; Jerusalem. The ark of the covenant had been many years at Kirjath-jearim, and David prepared a tabernacle for it in Jerusalem. It was moved on a new cart, when it should have been carried by Levites. Uzzah touched it to steady it, and was stricken dead. It was left in the home of Obed-edom three months, and then was taken to Jerusalem with great rejoicing. Psa. 24 was probably used on this occasion.

X. Topic: Effectual reproof. Place: Jerusalem. In the midst of David's prosperous reign he fell into temptation and yielded, and became guilty of the sin of adultery. He later caused the death of Uriah in an effort to shield himself. The Lord sent the prophet Nathan to him to rebuke him. He used the parable of the little ewe lamb, and uttered the memorable and impressive words, "Thou art the man."

XI. Topic: Doctrine and experience. Place: Jerusalem. Psa. 32 doubtless has reference to David's experience in his restoration to God's favor after his grievous fall. He declares the blessedness of those who are free from condemnation. He shows the bitterness of soul of those who cover up their sins and of the relief that comes with confession. He contrasts the condition of the wicked with that of the righteous. The wicked have many sorrows and distresses and have no comfort from the Lord. The righteous are surrounded by God's mercies.

XII. Topic: Comprehensive prayer. Place: Perhaps this psalm was written at Gath. Psa. 141 was written by David during a time of severe affliction, probably when he was fleeing from Saul. He prays that his prayers may be heard. He desires to have divine help that his words may be right, that he may be kept from ungodly acts and from the snares of the wicked.

TABULAR VIEW

NO.	SUBJECTS	GOLDEN TEXTS	PRACTICAL TRUTHS	OUTLINES
I.	The Resurrection—Easter Lesson. Matt. 28: 1-10.	Now is Christ risen from the dead. 1 Cor. 15: 20.	Jesus died and rose again to give spiritual and eternal life to us.	I. The empty tomb. II. Bearing the message. III. Meeting Jesus.
II.	David Anointed King. 1 Sam. 16: 1-23.	Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. 1 Sam. 16: 7.	True excellence is of the heart.	I. Samuel sent to Bethlehem. II. The anointing of David. III. David called to Saul's court.
III.	The Shepherd Psalm. Psa. 23: 1-6.	The Lord is my shepherd. Psa. 23: 1.	The Lord guides, protects and provides for his people.	I. Provision. II. Guidance. III. Protection. IV. Comfort.
IV.	David and Goliath. 1 Sam. 17: 1-54.	If God be for us, who can be against us? Rom. 8: 31.	With God's help we can be constantly victorious.	I. Goliath's challenge and David's acceptance. II. David's armor. III. Goliath's boast. IV. David's victory.
V.	Saul Tries to Kill David. 1 Sam. 19: 1-24.	Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe. Prov. 29: 25.	God's protection is over the righteous.	I. Jonathan's care for David. II. David's escape from Saul. III. Saul prophesying.
VI.	Friendship of David and Jonathan. 1 Sam. 20: 1-42.	A friend loveth at all times. Prov. 17: 17.	The truest friendship has a religious basis.	I. The covenant. II. Jonathan's fruitless plea. III. The loving farewell.
VII.	David Spares Saul. 1 Sam. 26: 1-25.	Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. Luke 6: 27.	The righteous are merciful to all.	I. Saul seeking David's life. II. Saul in David's power. III. David rebukes Saul. IV. Saul's confession.
VIII.	David King over Judah and Israel. 2 Sam. 2: 1-7; 5: 1-5.	The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped. Psa. 28: 7.	The Lord is faithful in fulfilling his promises.	I. David made king of Judah. II. Message to Jabesh-gilead. III. David made king of all Israel.
IX.	David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem. 2 Sam. 6: 1-19; Psa. 24: 1-10.	I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Psa. 122: 1.	There is joy connected with true worship.	I. The removal of the ark of the covenant. II. The ark brought into Jerusalem. III. A song of triumph.
X.	Nathan Rebukes David. 2 Sam. 11: 1-12: 7.	Create in me a clean heart, O God. Psa. 51: 10.	God condemns the guilty and forgives the penitent.	I. David's grievous fall. II. Bath-sheba becomes David's wife. III. David reproved.
XI.	The Blessedness of Forgiveness. Psa. 32: 1-11.	Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Psa. 32: 1.	Confession of sin and forgiveness bring relief.	I. The joy of pardon. II. The pain of sin concealed. III. Relief in confession. IV. Instruction.
XII.	A Prayer for the Tempted — Temperance Lesson. Psa. 141: 1-10.	Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me. Psa. 141: 9.	The tempted find relief in prayer.	I. A longing to have prayer heard. II. Petitions for deliverance from temptation.

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The length of time covered by the quarter's lessons. 2. The condition of Israel as shown in the events studied at the opening of the quarter; at the close. 3. The persons prominently mentioned in the lessons of the quarter. 4. The lesson on the resurrection.

II. THEME.—God's care for his people.

III. A STUDY OF SAUL.—1. His fair prospects at the time of his anointing. 2. His failures to obey the Lord. 3. The withdrawal of the Holy Spirit. 4. Possessed of an evil spirit. 5. The sins of jealousy, hatred and murder. 6. His acknowledgments to David. 7. His death. 8. His strong points and his weak ones.

IV. A STUDY OF DAVID.—1. Anointed by Samuel at Bethlehem. 2. His appearance in the camp of Israel in the valley of Elah. 3. His devotion and courage led him to offer to meet the giant. 4. Instrumental in the defeat of the Philistine army. 5. Twice spares Saul's life. 6. His second and third anointings as king. 7. His restoration of religious worship. 8. His sin and repentance. 9. His psalms, as expressive of his moral and spiritual condition. 10. His prosperous reign.

V. A STUDY OF JONATHAN.—1. A son of Saul and brother-in-law of David. 2. His courage in attacking a Philistine stronghold and gaining the victory for Israel. 3. His love for David and his helpfulness to him. 4. His death in battle.

VI. A STUDY OF NATHAN.—1. A prophet of the Lord. 2. His fidelity. 3. His message from the Lord to David with respect to building the house of the Lord. 4. His parable of the little ewe lamb. 5. The charge to David, "Thou art the man," brought confession.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**A change of kingship.**

I. The time of preparation.
II. The nation reorganized.
III. The abuse of kingly power.

I. The time of preparation. Divine sovereignty declared a vacancy of the throne of Israel. Through the prophet Samuel, Saul was informed that the kingship should not continue in his family, yet he was permitted to hold the throne during his lifetime. During those closing years he had the opportunity to prove conclusively to all Israel his real character and his inability to accomplish for them what they sought when they first demanded a king. In the meantime Samuel was called upon to anoint David to be successor to Saul. Without any declaration to Saul or to Israel of the change instituted or to David of the full meaning of his anointing, events followed preparatory to a change of kingship. Samuel withdrew from association with Saul and devoted himself to the building up of a school of prophets, an institution of great value in later times. David's introduction into Saul's court, apparently to employ his musical skill for the comfort of Saul in his seasons of despondency and ill temper, gave the youthful shepherd a glimpse into royal life. He became familiar with public interests and officials of the court. When called to Saul's notice on a second occasion, he was prepared to offer his service in a conflict with the Philistine giant, the issue of which should determine whether Israel or the Philistines were victors. From that period David figured prominently in the wars against the Philistines, gaining favor with the nation and experience as a warrior. Saul's nature being alienated from God, he sought occasion against David's life, rather than in giving thanks to God for victories gained for Israel. The Lord spread a table for David in the presence of his enemy in the friendship of Jonathan, Saul's son,—a friendship that was as remarkable in its purity and constancy as Saul's purpose was in envy and malice. The years of exile and flight to avoid the murderous designs of Saul seemed a strange preparation for occupying a throne; yet the marvelous deliverances and the remarkable opportunities afforded to David to prove his loyalty to the Lord's anointed marked the divine providence in sparing his life for a noble purpose.

II. The nation reorganized. The discipline of years had so subdued David's nature, that the vacant throne was no attraction to him except as God should direct his course to it. He exhibited true greatness when he consented to reign over Judah alone. It was to him the earnest of the whole kingdom. He could wait God's time and the people's choice. Judah's advance in choosing David confirmed the preeminence of that tribe over the others, as the one through which the Messiah should come. Abner, captain of Saul's host, continued the strife for supremacy in Saul's family. Contrary to David's policy, civil war ensued. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life;" and so it proved when at the end of seven and one half years, Israel called upon David to reign over the whole kingdom. In the spirit of devout patriotism David began reorganization and the establishment of a strong center of government at Jerusalem, followed by the reestablishment of national religion. Long years of neglect of the laws of Moses with no worship connected with the ark of the covenant had reduced the people to ignorance and impiety. They were made to recognize God's living presence and his strict regard for obedience in their first attempt at removing the ark from its lodgment in the house of Abinadab. Under the strict observance of law amid repeated worship, the ark was placed in the tabernacle which David prepared for it in Jerusalem.

III. The abuse of kingly power. Through perils of war, through bitter and undeserved persecution, through delays of promised promotion, through ridicule and scorn David had proved himself the man after God's own heart. It was when peace and prosperity surrounded him, when his kingdom was established, when he indulged in ease that temptation overcame him, beginning in the lust of his own nature and ending in cruel murder. It is the one recorded sin in his history and for which he earnestly sought pardon, but from which many evil consequences followed during his entire reign. T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Jesus Christ is the antitype of David. He is our sweet Psalmist who indites our songs and tunes our hearts to praise God. He is our great Prophet and King, who instructs, forms and governs his church, the Israel of God. Through humiliation, labor, reproach and temptation he obtained his kingdom and glory. He destroyed the lions, the bears, and the giants of opposition. In his sanctuary he is actively engaged in preparing the temple for the eternal abode and worship of his people. He only is the good Shepherd who says, "I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep" (Ezek. 34:15, R. V.).

The shepherd feeds his sheep. There are many fields in the great pasture lands of life. Some lie along the quiet watercourses, rich in quietness and assurance. Some stretch along the broad highways where toil and suffering give the discipline necessary to the maintenance of strength. Some lie among the darkened canyons, where the darkness and the cries of beasts of prey result in increased trust and in precious revelations of the care of the Shepherd. Still other fields lie on the hilltops of the Delectable Mountains of life, where the sun shines warm, the breezes touch gently and the prospects are enchanting. Many fields, but into each in turn the Shepherd leads his flock and they gladly pasture where He feeds.

The shepherd leads and guards his sheep. A distinguished general led his army by forced marches through a sterile and hostile country. He dismounted and put himself on a level with his men. He shared their hard bed; he lived on their scanty rations; every foot they walked, he walked; every foe they faced, he faced; every hardship they endured, he bore; in short, he came down to their condition and taught them by example. As a result his army was invincible because of their respect and love for their leader. So Christ goes before his sheep, "and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice" (John 10:4). A Christian mother who lived in New York, in very humble circumstances, had only one child, a little boy about seven years old, whom she had taught to know and love the Savior. One day she was startled by a loud knock at the door. A messenger informed her that her little boy had been run over and was at the police station. She hurried to the station and found her boy surrounded by strangers. She was told that a large wagon had gone over his foot; but on examining it carefully, she was surprised to find no real injury done. "Why, Willie darling, how was it possible for the wheel to have gone over your foot and not have crushed it?" The little fellow looked up in his mother's face and said, "I guess God must have put it in a hollow place."

The shepherd knows his own sheep. Doubtless there were thousands of Israelites whom David did not know by name, yet his antitype "calleth his own sheep by name" (John 10:3). During General Sherman's march to the sea, a colored woman stood in the door of her cabin and watched regiment after regiment, all similar in dress and appearance, pass by, until thousands came and went; when, in her bewilderment she said, "I reckon you 'uns ain't all got names!" It seemed to her impossible that each soldier should be a distinct and recognized personality. God's sheep are in number more than a few thousand soldiers, yet each one is separate and so personally known to the Shepherd that his name is written on his hands. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—We should trust and obey the Lord.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

The Resurrection—I

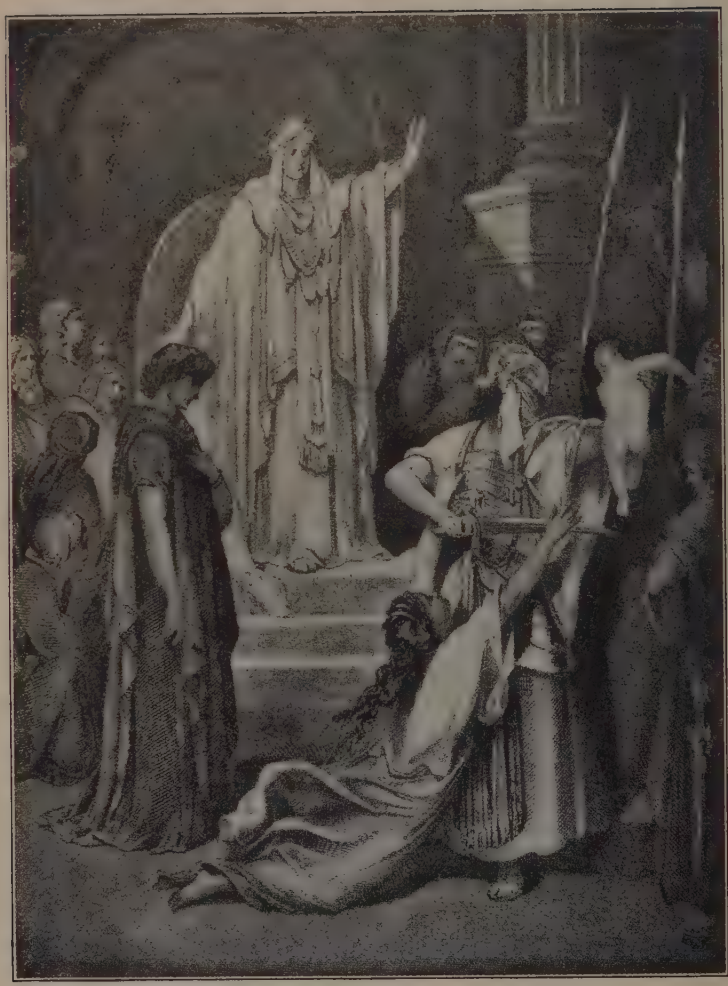
David { To be a king—II, IV, V, VI, VII
David { The king—VIII, IX, X
David { The psalmist—III, XI, XII

The resurrection. Review the lesson on Christ's resurrection by asking several simple questions to bring out the leading facts in connection with that event. He had power to rise from the dead and he has power to save us and to bring us to himself at last. He is alive to be with his followers and help them while they are on earth. He is alive, and is interceding for us in heaven.

David, being prepared for kingship. Since David is mentioned in connection with every lesson of the quarter after the first, it will be well to make the review center about him. There are several interesting stories to be told, and they must be brief. Commence with the visit of Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint David king. It was a great day for Jesse's family, and it was a great day especially for David. The children will be eager to hear or tell the story of David and Goliath. It was because David loved the Lord and his nation that he was willing to go out against the giant. He had faith in God, and God helped him to sling the smooth stone so accurately that the great warrior fell, and Israel gained the victory. Let the children tell why Saul wished to have David in his palace. He was a musician. Saul did not like David very well because the people thought he was braver and better than Saul, and he tried to slay him. Tell about the friendship between David and Jonathan. Jonathan helped David to get away from Saul. The stories of David's sparing Saul's life on two occasions will be interesting. They show that David respected Saul, even if Saul tried to kill him. During all this time David was being prepared to become a great king of Israel. He suffered much and learned many things.

David, the king. Saul fell in battle, so there was no king in Israel. Tell how the Lord directed David to Hebron, where he was made king of Judah. He ruled Judah well and God made him king over all the tribes. He was a good king and had prosperity. He brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. He became tempted and fell into sin. Tell the story of Nathan's rebuke and of David's repentance. God forgave him. David had a great desire to build the house of the Lord, but the Lord did not let him do it. He promised him that he should have a son who should build it.

David, the psalmist. Let the children tell in what things David was great. He was great in his devotion to God, great as a general, great as a king and great as a writer. Can the children repeat the Shepherd Psalm? Let the class tell what the shepherd does for his sheep. He finds pasture and water for them. He protects them from wild animals and robbers. He leads them away from dangerous places. Recall the psalm that shows how blessed it is to be forgiven. If one has done wrong, he must confess his sins and ask forgiveness.



JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON

ELIJAH

This prophet stands alone in his class among the prophets of the Old Testament. As the condition of Israel in the time of the later judges demanded such a personage as Samuel, so the condition of Israel about two centuries before its fall demanded a prophet like Elijah. The nation had fallen into gross idolatry. During the years since the secession of the ten tribes and the establishment of the northern kingdom, the moral and spiritual condition became steadily worse. Idolatry became flagrant. Ahab had married a heathen wife who was heartless and conscienceless; and he had been influenced by her to worship Baal and to commit other wicked deeds.

This bold defiance of God and his law called for bold and powerful reproof. In the person of Elijah the Lord had in preparation a man for the occasion. Trained in mountain fastnesses and accustomed to wilderness life, Elijah came forth suddenly from his seclusion with a message for the defiant king. The social standing of Elijah was very low according to the standard by which Ahab would be inclined to reckon, yet the rugged wilderness prophet stood boldly before the king and foretold the extended famine that was to afflict the kingdom. The prophet delivered the message with all the boldness that comes from an intimate acquaintance with God. As far as Ahab was concerned, Elijah dropped out of sight immediately after delivering the message, and did not reappear for three and one half years.

It was a weary and fruitless search that Ahab made for the man whom alone he blamed for the destructive drought that was upon the land. Search where he would, no trace of Elijah could be found. As the prophet had said, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (1 Kings 17:1), Ahab thought if he could find Elijah, he might compel him to speak the word that would end the drought, or he would have the satisfaction of putting the prophet to death. God's protecting and preserving hand was upon his prophet.

The appearance of Elijah to Ahab when the famine was about to be broken was as mysterious as had been his former appearance. There was no fear in Elijah's heart. The Lord had sent him again to the king. The prophet was the master of the situation. It was for him now to give directions to the king. Baal, the god of fruitfulness, had not given any relief from the prolonged famine, and now a final test was proposed to ascertain whether or not he had any power over nature. He was the sun-god and would be right at home in a fire test. Ahab had no power to reject the challenge and the test was on. The outcome of the test, which was fairly conducted, proved to the people that Jehovah was the true God.

While the people were convinced, Jezebel was enraged. She was unmoved either by the famine or by the triumph of the true God on Mount Carmel. All she could see was the hated Elijah, and his life she purposed to destory. In the course the prophet took from Jezreel to Horeb, he learned lessons about God and duty he had not yet understood. God works always toward an end, but that end is not in every case reached by one movement. God speaks by the fire, and he speaks also by a still, small voice. The prophet thought he was the only one who would stand by Jehovah, and his life was sought, but God told him of the thousands of men in Israel who had not worshiped at the altars of Baal. His work was not yet done, for he was commissioned to appoint his successor and to anoint a king over Syria and one over Israel.

Elijah's translation is one of the great events of Bible history. The prophet was remarkable in his appearance, in his ministry and in his departure from earth. He was the man for his generation, but he belongs to all time. His boldness and confidence have inspired the church through all ages. His appearance with Moses and Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration adds to the estimate of his character which we gather from the Old Testament scriptures. The prophet is associated with Moses the lawgiver and Christ the Savior in that glorious event.

LESSON I

HOME READINGS.—Mon., June 28.—Absalom's failure.—2 Sam. 18:1-15. Tu.—Absalom's ambition and deceit.—2 Sam. 15:1-12. Wed.—David's sorrow over Absalom.—2 Sam. 18:31-19:8. Th.—A father's instruction.—Prov. 13:1-11. Fr.—A true son and heir.—Gal. 4:1-7. Sat.—The way to success.—Prov. 3:1-10. Su.—The divine Son.—Heb. 5:1-10.

Absalom's Failure.—2 Samuel 18: 1-15.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verse, 5)

SUPT.—1 And Da'vid numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.

School.—2 And Da'vid sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Jo'ab, and a third part under the hand of Ab'i-shai the son of Zer-u-i'ah, Jo'ab's brother, and a third part under the hand of It'ta-i the Git'tite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.

3 But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now thou art worth ten thousand of us: therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city.

4 And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.

5 And the king commanded Jo'ab and Ab'i-shai and It'ta-i, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Ab'sa-lom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Ab'sa-lom.

6 So the people went out into the field against Is'ra-el: and the battle was in the wood of E'phra-im;

7 Where the people of Is'ra-el were slain before the servants of Da'vid, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men.

8 For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9 And Ab'sa-lom met the servants of Da'vid. And Ab'sa-lom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away.

10 And a certain man saw it, and told Jo'ab, and said, Behold, I saw Ab'sa-lom hanged in an oak.

11 And Jo'ab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest him, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten she'kels of silver, and a girdle.

12 And the man said unto Jo'ab, Though I should receive a thousand she'kels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Ab'i-shai and It'ta-i, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Ab'sa-lom.

13 Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me.

14 Then said Jo'ab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Ab'sa-lom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.

15 And ten young men that bare Jo'ab's armour compassed about and smote Ab'sa-lom, and slew him.

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1 And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. 2 And David sent forth the people, a third part under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also. 3 But the people said, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but thou art worth ten thousand of us; therefore now it is better that thou be ready to succor us out of the city. 4 And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate-side, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. 5 And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

6 So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the forest of Ephraim. 7 And the people of Israel were smitten there before the servants of David, and there was a great slaughter there that day of twenty thousand men. 8 For the battle was there spread over the face of all the country; and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9 And Absalom chanced to meet the servants of David. And Absalom was riding upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between heaven and earth; and the mule that was under him went on. 10 And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak. 11 And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest it, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten pieces of silver, and a girdle. 12 And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand pieces of silver in my hand, yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom. 13 Otherwise if I had dealt falsely against his life (and there is no matter hid from the king), then thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me. 14 Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. 15 And ten young men that bare Joab's armor compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Eph. 6:1.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**Disrespect for parents leads to still greater sins.**

TOPIC.—**Rebellion by intrigue.**

OUTLINE.—**I. David's tenderness toward Absalom. II. The battle in the forest. III. Absalom is slain.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1025.**

PLACE.—**Mahanaim, a short distance east of the Jordan.**

INTRODUCTION.—Absalom was the third son of David. He first came into prominence through the murder of his half-brother Amnon in revenge for defiling his sister Tamar. He then fled from home and lived in exile with his grandfather in Geshur, in Syria. He was recalled to Jerusalem after three years, and for two years more was not called into the presence of his father. It is evident that Absalom was ambitious to become king in his father's place, and it may be that this was one motive in slaying his eldest brother Amnon. His second brother Chileab seems to have been dead, and only his father was in the way of his accession to the throne. Absalom made use of every artifice possible to win the affections of the people and thus prepare the way for his contemplated rebellion. When he had gathered a sufficiently large following, he had himself proclaimed king at Hebron and marched toward Jerusalem to drive his father from the throne to assume control of the government. David heard of his son's approach with an army, and fled with a small company of supporters across the Jordan. He made no opposition to Absalom then, for he did not desire to engage in civil war, and he thought too tenderly of his son to attempt to injure him. He may have thought that the sentence pronounced upon him by Nathan for his sins was about to be executed, and resistance would be futile. Then, too, he was not prepared for war. Absalom took possession of the kingdom and assumed all the prerogatives appertaining to the throne. This position he held for the space of three months. Ahithophel was David's counselor, but turned to Absalom. He advised Absalom to pursue David at once and overthrow him. Hushai, David's counselor, went to Absalom and advised him to delay his pursuit of David, until he should raise a large army. He did this to allow David time to make large preparations for war. Hushai's counsel prevailed over Ahithophel's, and the latter was so grieved that he hanged himself. In all this trouble, including Amnon's sin and death and Absalom's rebellion, David was reaping the bitter fruit of his sins; yet he had repented and was restored to the divine favor.

COMMENTARY.—I. DAVID'S TENDERNESS TOWARD ABSALOM (vs. 1-5). **1. David numbered**—He mustered and reviewed his troops. We are not told how many he had in his army. Josephus places the number at four thousand. **2. a third part**—David divided his men into three companies that he might succeed in dividing the forces of the enemy. **Joab**—He was the ablest general of his time and a man upon whom David relied in this campaign. David was himself a warrior, and even if his army was smaller than Absalom's, he had great military leaders, and trained soldiers. **I will surely go forth with you**—He purposed to take the chief command in the engagement. **3. thou shalt not go forth**—So much depending on the life of the king, he was not allowed to take the field in person.—*J., F. & B.* If the king should be slain, Absalom's end would be accomplished. **that thou succour us**—"That thou be ready to succor us."—*R. V.* If David should remain in the city of Mahanaim, he would be able to send reenforcements wherever they might be needed. **4. what seemeth you best I will do**—The king was inclined to yield to the wishes and judgment of his people. **5. deal gently for my sake with....Absalom**—It was David's deep affection for the beautiful youth, which, notwithstanding all his errors, still yearned for him. The tenderness of the father exceeded the justice of the king.—*Whedon.* David was the father of this worthless young man, and is it to be wondered at that he feels as a father? Who, in his circumstances, that had such feelings as every man should have, would have felt or acted otherwise?—*Clarke.* Some think that David desired that Absalom should be spared to repent of his wicked deeds. **all the people heard**—The entire army knew the king's feelings toward his rebellious son and knew that he wished no harm to come to him.

II. THE BATTLE IN THE FOREST (vs. 6-8). **6. the people**—The supporters of David. **against Israel**—The followers of Absalom. It was in reality one faction of Israel against another. Here is an indication of the line of cleavage between Israel and Judah. **the wood of Ephraim**—The exact location of this forest is not known, but it was probably not far from Mahanaim toward the Jordan. **7. the people of Israel were slain**—Since twenty thousand of Absalom's men fell in the battle, we conclude that he must have had an immense army in comparison with that of David. Evidently the Lord undertook for the king and gave him a decided victory over the rebellious army. **8. the battle was there scattered**—The surface of the country was such that the army could not well keep together and David's men were separated into three divisions. **the wood devoured more people....than the sword**—"The explanation generally given is that they perished in the pits and precipices and morasses of the forest; but this seems unlikely. More probably it means that, owing to the nature of the ground, more were slain in the pursuit through the forest, than in the actual battle."

III. ABSALOM IS SLAIN (vs. 9-15). **9. Absalom met the servants of David**—Absalom in flight found himself among his enemies and hastened to escape from them. **head caught hold of the oak**—As he rode among the low spreading trees of the forest, his head caught in the fork of a branch and, his mule passing on, left him there suspended. Many suppose that, since his hair was exceedingly heavy (ch. 14:26), it was caught in the branches. **10. a certain man.... told Joab**—The man would not disobey the king's order by killing Absalom, and therefore took the news directly to Joab. **hanged in an oak**—Absalom's condition was a desperate one. His army was defeated and badly demoralized, and he was struggling to free himself from the boughs by which, without human agency, he was held fast. **11. ten shekels of silver**—The shekel was about a half ounce in weight, and its value varied. The ten shekels would be equivalent to two or three dollars. **a girdle**—This was worn to hold the loose clothing about the waist, and was often of expensive workmanship. **12. against the king's son**—The man was loyal to David. **13. against mine own life**—It was not simply respect for the king that kept him from touching Absalom, for by doing so he would have incurred the king's displeasure and would probably have lost his life. Joab might have taken a position with the king against him. **14. thrust them through the heart of Absalom**—Joab acted contrary to the king's express orders, but he was shrewd enough to see that David would not be secure in his kingdom while Absalom was alive, therefore he took the responsibility of taking his life. **15. ten young men**—These armor-bearers accompanied Joab wherever he went. **slew him**—If Joab's darts pierced Absalom's heart, he was dead already, and the young men inflicted wounds upon his lifeless body.

QUESTIONS.—Who was Absalom? What course did he take to obtain the kingdom? How and where was he proclaimed king? What course did David take while Absalom marched toward Jerusalem? How did Absalom's army compare in size with that of David? What directions did David give his army regarding Absalom? Describe the battle and the results.

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. David's great sins were forgiven and he was restored to the divine favor, but there were distresses in store for him. 2. He could not forget his fall, nor could his people forget it. 3. David had severe trials in his early life, and he had troubles in his closing years. 4. The sons of David. 5. The natural succession to the throne. 6. Sins in David's family.

II. Theme.—A rebellion that failed.

III. An unholy ambition.—1. Absalom's personal appearance (2 Sam. 14:25, 26). 2. His motives in slaying Amnon. 3. He was both attractive and unscrupulous. 4. He desired to be king of Israel. 5. He had no right to the throne while his father was alive. 6. His ambition trampled down filial affection. 7. He was a traitor. 8. The sad results of disobedience.

IV. A bold attempt.—1. Absalom's successful efforts to win the affections of the people. 2. David was dishonored by his disloyal and unfilial son. 3. Absalom is an example of the unprincipled politician. 4. He made large promises to the people to win their support. 5. His following. 6. Proclaimed king where his father had first been made king. 7. His march to Jerusalem and David's flight.

V. A disastrous failure.—1. Absalom ought to have failed. 2. David gained time to assemble an army. 3. Comparison between his army and that of Absalom. 4. The orders given to deal gently with Absalom. 5. The great victory. 6. The humiliating plight of Absalom. 7. Absalom's death. 8. Joab's responsibility. 9. The grief of David over his son's death.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Rebellion by intrigue.**

I. Openly declared, justly punished.
II. Heroically met and vanquished.

I. Openly declared, justly punished. This lesson is a narrative of that fatal contest where Absalom fought against his father David for the throne of Israel. It relates one of the saddest tragedies in human history. Absalom knowingly pledged himself to his father's ruin. His last purpose was to deprive his father of his throne, his happiness, and even his life, if necessary to obtain that purpose. David had no greater enemy in Israel. Absalom had ceased to be a son in the essential sense of the word. His endeavors to live without his father's fellowship and blessing seemed most successful. Lost love was succeeded by antagonism. Wise and astute men encouraged and helped him. Forces were placed at his disposal. The aim of his ambition seemed to be within reach when he found his forces scattered by an opposing force, the strength of which he did not expect to meet. Absalom learned emphatically that the authority despised had to be dealt with. After a long course of persistent wickedness Absalom met his doom. He met David's soldiers. Though they spared him and gave him opportunity to escape, according to David's request, divine vengeance would not spare him. The instruments of his death were least thought of in battle. His luxuriant hair, an occasion for vain glory, an inanimate tree and his trusted animal, together formed the mode of his execution. None of his companions in crime remained with him to release him from his torture, but left him to his fate, suspended between heaven and earth, a sad spectacle indeed. David, having no personal revenge against his own son, and knowing the character of Joab, he urged upon him as a strong restraint, consideration for himself as king and father. The legal question as to what would have to be done with a captured rebel had not been brought before the king's decision. To the soldier, who brought the report of Absalom's distress, the question of prudence was not considered. Obedience to the royal authority was his prime duty, the governing rule of his conduct. No persuasion of a general could turn him from his fixed principle. He was amazed that any one should think of deviating from a command so plain. His spirit was politically and morally sound and pure. Joab swept aside all such forceful pressure because his conduct was governed by the consideration of a policy of expediency. He was a man of deeds when matters were urgent.

II. Heroically met and vanquished. David was challenged to vindicate his own throne. He was obliged to meet the insubordination and the revolt of his own son. He was obliged to care for the kingdom over which he had been appointed by God. The validity of his anointing was still unrevoked by him who ordained it. Duty to himself, his kingdom and his God compelled him to prevent the usurpation attempted. The recollection of such duty aroused courage and resolution. The battle had to be fought out in his own nature before it was transferred to the open field. David suppressed the pain of making war against his son because it was right to do so, but that did not imply the uprooting from his heart of tenderness, compassion and yearning sorrow, even for a prodigal son. The emotions of his father heart were kept under by the prompt and energetic application of all his powers of mind and body in the performance of kingly duty. The calm and sober way in which he began to marshal his forces showed that help had come from God to subordinate the anguish of his heart to the sense of duty. He did not waver in his kingly design to subdue rebellion, nor did he show a wicked leniency toward an evil life in his son. He could not but see, in the rebellion, the chastening hand of God, before which it became him in his lifelong penitence, mingled with sincere trust, to bow. David's men offered themselves willingly to his service and readily risked their lives for his sake. They set an inestimable value on his life in comparison to their own. Patriotism and piety required utmost care for his preservation. A general and intense feeling of resentment was naturally felt against Absalom by all except his father, whom he had chiefly wronged. T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Absalom, the fast young man. "And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him" (ch. 15:1). This was the spectacular method of a sport of King David's day. It was Absalom's way of "cutting a wide swath." The modern sport takes his automobile, his cigarette case, his drink flask and boon companions and

"—runs himself life's mad career,
Wild as the wave."

But, ancient or modern, the harvest season is sure. Thomas Carlyle in his essay on Robert Burns describes the end of the dissolute Absaloms, Burnses and Byrons as follows: "But now, at this early age, he quits the paternal roof, goes forth into looser, louder, more exciting society, and becomes initiated in those dissipations, those vices, which a certain class of philosophers have asserted to be a natural preparative for entering on active life, a kind of mud-bath, in which the youth is, as it were, necessitated to steep, and, we suppose, cleanse himself before the real toga of manhood can be laid upon him. For now, with principles assailed by evil example from without, by passions raging like demons within, he had little need of skeptical misgivings to whisper treason in the heat of the battle, or to cut off his retreat if he were already defeated. The blackest desperation now gathers over him, broken only by the red lightnings of remorse. The whole fabric of his life is blasted asunder, for now not only his character, but his personal liberty, is to be lost: men and fortune are leagued for his hurt, 'hungry ruin has him in the wind.'" As with Byron and with Burns, so with Absalom, "the fire that is in him is not a strong, still, central fire, warming into beauty the products of a world, but it is the mad fire of a volcano; and now we look sadly into the ashes of a crater, which, ere long, will fill itself with snow."

Absalom, the ungrateful son. There is much that might be said about David's lack of control of his children. Absalom was certainly a petted and spoiled child. Still more might be said about the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children, for David's sins followed him; but the great weakness that stands out in Absalom's character is his lack of respect for, and his base ingratitude toward, his father.

Absalom, the cause of grief. That gray-haired, sorrow-seamed watcher over Mahanaim's gate is only one of the thousands of like watchers over the land to-day. That stricken, trembling form that creeps out of sight, weeping as he goes, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom," is only one out of many, for

"There is no far nor near,
There is neither there nor here,
There is neither soon nor late,
In that Chamber over the gate,
Nor any long ago
To that cry of human woe,
O Absalom, my son!"

David is the type of him who stands on the summit of Olivet, and with a sorrow that has been melting hearts of stone ever since, cried and wept, "Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke 19:42). G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—Those who disobey and dishonor their parents are punished.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Absalom { Wicked / Rebellious / Punished

HONOR YOUR PARENTS

Absalom was wicked. Write on the board David's name in large letters. Ask the children each to tell something about him. Write one word of each answer around the name on the board, and let brief stories be told. If any one suggests that he sinned, let it be known distinctly that he repented and was forgiven, but it would have been better if he had not sinned. Tell a few things about Absalom. He was a son of David. He had two older brothers. His eldest brother was wicked and did something that displeased Absalom, and he took his life. We do not read that he was ever sorry for his sin or repented. He ran away from home and was gone three years. We can imagine how David felt over this sin.

Rebellious. Absalom wished to be king in his father's place. He had no right to rule Israel. The Lord appointed David king, but he did not appoint Absalom, who wished so much to be king that he was ready to have his father's life taken. Tell how Absalom tried to have the people like him better than they did his father. Repeat the commandment that speaks about our honoring our fathers and mothers. A good boy likes to have his parents thought well of, but Absalom did not care. He wished others to think well of him. Note that he found many people who would stand by him, and they made him king or called him king at Hebron, and he went to Jerusalem to drive his father away. No good son would do such a thing as that. David did not wish to hurt Absalom, so he took a few people with him and went a long distance away from Jerusalem.

Absalom punished. Tell the story of the great preparations that Absalom made to fight against his father, and of the way David arranged his army to meet him. It was a terrible thing for a son to go out with an army to slay his father. Absalom seemed to be having things his own way until the day of the battle came. Describe the meeting of the armies and the defeat of Absalom's side. Disobedient children come to a bad end and Absalom did on that day. Note how he was caught in a tree and was afterward slain by Joab and his men. This was a severe punishment, but it put an end to the trouble in Israel for the time.

Honor your parents. Let the class tell you what they think it means for them to honor their parents. Many young men do wrong things and are shut up in prison. A large number of these would say, if they were asked, that they began their evil course by being disobedient to their parents. This sin led to another, and that to another until they committed crimes that brought them into prison. It is a sad fact that a large proportion of those who are sentenced to serve terms in prison are young men.

LESSON II

HOME READINGS.—Mon., July 5.—Solomon anointed king.—1 Kings 1:28-40. Tu.—The rival spared.—1 Kings 1:41-53. Wed.—David's charge to Solomon.—1 Kings 2:1-12. Th.—Righteousness of God's kingdom.—Matt. 5:13-20. Fr.—The invincible King.—Psa. 2. Sat.—The blessed and only Potentate.—1 Tim. 6:11-16. Su.—The everlasting kingdom.—2 Peter 1:1-11.

Solomon Anointed King.—1 Kings 1: 1-2: 12. Print 1: 28-40.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 39, 40)

SUPT.—28 Then king Da'vid answered and said, Call me Bath'-she-ba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

School.—29 And the king sware, and said, As the Lord liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress,

30 Even as I sware unto thee by the Lord God of Is'ra-el, saying, Assuredly Sol'o-mon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.

31 Then Bath'-she-ba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king Da'vid live for ever.

32 And king Da'vid said, Call me Za'dok the priest, and Na'than the prophet, and Be-nai'ah the son of Je-hoi'a-da. And they came before the king.

33 The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Sol'o-mon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gi'hon:

34 And let Za'dok the priest and Na'than the prophet anoint him there king over Is'ra-el: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Sol'o-mon.

35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Is'ra-el and over Ju'dah.

36 And Be-nai'ah the son of Je-hoi'a-da answered the king, and said, A'men: the Lord God of my lord the king say so too.

37 As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Sol'o-mon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king Da'vid.

38 So Za'dok the priest, and Na'than the prophet, and Be-nai'ah the son of Je-hoi'a-da, and the Cher'e-thites, and the Pel'e-thites, went down, and caused Sol'o-mon to ride upon king Da'vid's mule, and brought him to Gi'hon.

39 And Za'dok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Sol'o-mon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Sol'o-mon.

40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

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28 Then king David answered and said, Call to me Bath-sheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king. 29 And the king sware, and said, As Jehovah liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, 30 verily as I sware unto thee by Jehovah, the God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; verily so will I do this day. 31 Then Bath-sheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did obeisance to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.

32 And king David said, Call to me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. 33 And the king said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: 34 and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel; and blow ye the trumpet, and say, Long live king Solomon. 35 Then ye shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead; and I have appointed him to be prince over Israel and over Judah. 36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: Jehovah, the God of my lord the king, say so too. 37 As Jehovah hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

38 So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. 39 And Zadok the priest took the horn of oil out of the Tent, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, Long live king Solomon. 40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind. 1 Chron. 28: 9.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**True prosperity comes to those who fully follow the Lord.**

TOPIC.—**King David's proclamation.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Adonijah's attempt to become king. II. His plans frustrated. III. Solomon made king. IV. David's charge.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1015.**

PLACE.—**Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—David was mourning deeply over Absalom's death and was likely, by this course, to weaken his hold upon the people. Joab counseled him to cease his mourning for the son who sought to destroy him and seize the kingdom, and attend to the affairs of the nation. Upon the invitation of his loyal subjects he returned to Jerusalem. David showed great favor to Barzillai, the Gileadite, who had given him strong support while he was in flight from Absalom. Sheba, a Benjamite, attempted to become king, and his insurrection was put down by the prompt efforts of Joab. The Philistines made war again against Israel and David was able to defeat them. During these last years of his life David composed the song of thanksgiving which is practically the same as Psa. 18. Through David's sin in numbering Israel a plague was sent upon the nation and seventy thousand fell. The pestilence was stayed at the thrashing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, and David purchased this spot as a place for an altar. This became the site of the temple which Solomon built later, and for which David in his lifetime made great preparations. David had been so actively engaged in warfare that the Lord forbade his building the temple. He is yet to experience trouble from his eldest surviving son, Adonijah, but is to see Solomon on the throne before he dies.

COMMENTARY.—I. ADONIJAH'S ATTEMPT TO BECOME KING (1:1-10). David was made king at the age of thirty years, and by the time he had reigned forty years he was feeble and did not have the strength and disposition to take an

active part in the government. Adonijah was his fourth son, but Amnon and Absalom were dead; and of Chileab no record appears since that of his birth (2 Sam. 3:3; 1 Chron. 3:1), therefore it is concluded that he, too, was dead, and that Adonijah was David's eldest surviving son. He was ambitious to become king, and took advantage of his father's feebleness to carry out his plans. It appears that he had not been held closely in check by his father and was prepossessing in his personal appearance (v. 6). He had prepared chariots and horsemen, and footmen to run before him, and had brought to his support Joab, David's military chief, and Abiathar, the priest. He had provided for the celebration of a great feast in the Kidron valley close to Jerusalem. He invited all his brothers but Solomon, and he left out Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the prophet, and most of David's men of war.

II. HIS PLANS FRUSTRATED (1:11-27). Nathan, the prophet, knew of Adonijah's insurrection, and he knew also that David had declared that Solomon should be king after him, for the Lord had designated him for that office (1 Chron. 22:9). Hence the prophet went to Bath-sheba, the mother of Solomon, told her of Adonijah's plot and urged her to tell the king about it, that he might declare that Solomon should succeed him in the kingdom. Bath-sheba obtained a hearing with the king, and a little later Nathan came in and told him all that Adonijah was doing, and asked him if it was by his direction that Adonijah was being made king. The prophet knew that David was ignorant of what his son was doing, and he wished to arouse him to instant action.

III. SOLOMON MADE KING (1:28-53). **28. call me Bath-sheba**—She had withdrawn from the king's presence when Nathan entered. **stood before the king**—In an attitude of reverence. **29. as the Lord liveth**—This was a usual form of oath or strong affirmation. **out of all distress**—David recalled vividly the many distresses which had fallen to his lot, and recognized God's hand in his deliverance from them. **30. even so will I certainly do**—David remembered the promise he had made and the promise which God had given to him, and was fully resolved to fulfil what he had pledged. **31. with her face to the earth**—This was an attitude of reverence and supplication. **let my lord king David live for ever**—It was the common Eastern formula. Bath-sheba implied thereby that in her zeal for Solomon's succession there was no desire for David's death, but only that the promise made to her concerning Solomon should not be broken. —*Cam. Bib.*

32. Benaiah—He was a military man and the captain of David's body-guard, and later became the leader of his army. **they came before the king**—Zadok, Nathan and Benaiah were the chief men of David's officers. **33. cause Solomon.... to ride upon mine own mule**—To ride upon the king's mule was almost equivalent to being crowned. In the Eastern mind it was an honor ever associated with that of wearing the royal apparel and the crown.—*Whedon.* It is said that it meant death to ride upon the king's mule without his permission. **to Gihon**—Scholars differ as to the location of Gihon; some suppose it to have been west of Jerusalem, and others east, not far from where Adonijah was celebrating a feast. **34. anoint him there king over Israel**—The anointing was an important part of the ceremony by which one was appointed king. It was a sign that such a person was made king, and it typified the bestowment of divine gifts upon him. **blow ye with the trumpet**—To call the attention of the people to the anointing. **God save king Solomon**—This was to be the public proclamation of the fact that Solomon was made king. **35. ye shall come up after him**—This would denote that they were his supporters. **sit upon my throne**—This act would complete the ceremony. His occupying his father's throne by his direction would mean that David handed the reins of government over to him. **36. amen**—So let it be. **37. even so be he with Solomon**—The prayer of Benaiah was comprehensive. David had been great as king in subduing the nation's enemies and in enlarging the territory of Israel, but Solomon would be still greater in extending his dominion and in wealth. **38. the Cherethites, and the Pelethites**—These constituted the king's body-guard. **39. an horn of oil out of the tabernacle**—It is clear that the oil used for anointing the king was the same as that used for anointing the priests in setting them apart for their office. **40. all the people**—There was a general response on the part of the people and they rallied to the standard of Solomon. **piped with pipes**—In 1 Sam. 10:5 pipes are mentioned as being used by the prophets. They were wind instruments similar to the modern flute. **the earth rent with the sound**—The rejoicing was so great that the sound seemed to jar the earth. David held a large place in the hearts of the people, but they were glad to receive that one of his sons as king whom he should designate. **41-53.** Adonijah at once gave up his effort to become king and sought mercy at the hands of Solomon, who spared his life and sent him home.

IV. DAVID'S CHARGE (2:1-12). Just before David died he charged Solomon, who was only nineteen or twenty years of age, to obey carefully all the law and to make it his business to serve the Lord. David had received the promise that if his children would walk before the Lord in truth with all their hearts, there would always be one of their line to occupy the throne of Israel. He charged Solomon to see that the sentence of death was visited upon Joab and Shimei for their crimes, and that kindness should be shown to the sons of Barzillai, for he had aided David at the time of Absalom's rebellion. Barzillai was a wealthy and prominent man and had furnished supplies to David and his army while they were at Mahanaim. David invited him to go to Jerusalem and live with him, but Barzillai was aged and preferred to live his remaining days in his own land and to be buried with his fathers. Shimei had insulted David in his flight from Jerusalem, but had in a sense repented and greeted him when he returned to his kingdom. David refrained from having him executed, but gave direction that he be put to death later. David died after having reigned forty years and was buried in the city of Jerusalem.

QUESTIONS.—How did Adonijah seek to become king? What plan did Nathan suggest to defeat Adonijah's purpose? What did David command to be done? How old was David at this time? How long had he reigned? How old was Solomon? Who was Benaiah? What dealings had Nathan with David before this? How was Solomon received by the people? What charge did David give Solomon?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. Intervening events following Absalom's death. (1) David's lament for Absalom. (2) Joab's rebuke. (3) David's return to Jerusalem. (4) David's gratitude to Barzillai. (5) Sheba's insurrection. (6) The Philistines defeated. (7) David's song of thanksgiving. (8) David's sin in numbering Israel. 2. David's successes as king. 3. The regard of the people for him.

II. THEME.—God's promise fulfilled.

III. AN ATTEMPT TO THWART GOD'S PURPOSE.—1. Adonijah was David's fourth son. 2. His natural right to succeed his father since his older brothers were dead. 3. His haste in seeking the throne while his father was living. 4. His likeness to Absalom. (1) Of fine appearance. (2) Wickedly ambitious. (3) Disrespectful to his father. 5. Obtained a following, as almost any sort of leader can to-day. 6. The great feast at En-rogel. 7. God had another plan for the kingdom.

IV. NATHAN'S WISE COUNSEL.—1. Nathan's previous messages to David. 2. Bath-sheba urged to plead her cause. 3. Nathan's impressive words. 4. David was old and feeble, yet he thoroughly grasped the situation. 5. His reliance upon God. 6. The directions given for making Solomon king.

V. SOLOMON MADE KING.—1. David's loyal supporters, Nathan, Zadok, Benaiah. 2. The procession. 3. The significance of riding upon the king's mule. 4. The anointing of Solomon. 5. The blowing of the trumpet. 6. The response of the people. 7. Solomon was king while his father still lived. 8. Adonijah's plea for his life. 9. Solomon's clemency. 10. David's charge to Solomon.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**King David's proclamation.**

I. The overthrow of intrigue.
II. The succession of kingship.

I. The overthrow of intrigue. Adonijah's declaration, "I will be king," embraced conspiracy, rebellion, intrigue, ingratitude, the defiance of a father, of a brother and of God. His ambition asserted itself with a complete disregard for the rights of others. It was nurtured in defiance of significant warning. His action suited his character. He carried to its logical issue the training which he had received in childhood. His youthful passions were stronger than his principles. His ambition was reckless and not easily thwarted. He saw with secret exultation the visible and rapid decline of his father's strength. He judged that the time had come to seize by force a crown which he could not secure by favor or procure by merit. Adonijah's ambition prompted him to an infringement of the divine ordinance, which was publicly known in the choice of Solomon; yet he influenced as many as he could to join him in his conspiracy and to aid him in accomplishing his intrigue. Nathan, the prophet, and Bath-sheba, the mother of Solomon, revealed the conspiracy, which gave the king time to avert the calamity. David still held the scepter. He was a king to the last. He wisely and carefully marshaled the affairs of his kingdom when age and death were upon him. He did not directly attack the false kingdom of Adonijah. A few words spoken by him unseated the usurper and placed the child of promise upon the throne. David's method was wisest and surest. It not only removed an evil, but it provided for future good.

II. The succession of kingship. "I go the way of all the earth." These words express the fortitude of a soul which had found a nobler inheritance than earth supplies,—a quiet composure and satisfaction, a peaceful self-surrender into the hands of the living God. In death David thought of duty. He took interest in Israel's future, and in the immediate responsibilities of his own house. He was concerned for the piety and prosperity of his son, and through him the piety and prosperity of the nation. He desired that Solomon should be nobler, better, happier than he had been. He would have him avoid the errors and evils into which he had fallen. The charge delivered to Solomon by his father was deeply religious in its spirit. Not only was Solomon introduced to a throne, but the book of the law was placed in his hands, to pursue, to understand and apply. Nothing was left to his own invention. The charge was official rather than personal. Even Solomon was to remember that he had a Sovereign over him. David used no vain repetitions when he spoke of "statutes, commandments, judgments, and testimonies." The whole law was to be remembered. The important aim of the charge was the right formation and development of character. During his life David had been very zealous for the Lord God of Israel. His great aim had been to keep the law. His ruling desire displayed itself in death. To him succession in piety, in living and acting faith was of greater importance than succession to the throne. He was assured that obedience to the will of God inevitably issued in prosperity in the truest sense of the word. David cared first for character, next for circumstances. He was a competent judge of manliness of character and conduct. When he advised Solomon to show himself a man, he attached no low and feeble sense to the term. He impressed the necessity of personal resolution, self-control, integrity against all bribery and corruption and a vital identity with the enduring interests of the people. Solomon was thus exhorted to prove himself wise, valorous, virtuous and, above all, loyal at heart to God, not distorted, crooked or perverted by sin, not boastful or self-confident. Such manhood implied struggle, conflict with self, resistance of evil influences, coupled with the assurance of blessedness. The occasion was most serious, the counsel most impressive. It was an aged man addressing a young man; a king his successor; a warrior addressing a man of peace; a man of action addressing a man of wisdom; a dying man addressing one on the threshold of an earthly career. It was a father's bequest to his beloved son.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Knowing and serving. "Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him" (Golden Text). The end of all true knowledge is service. Education that crams the head with knowledge and does not teach how to do is faulty. He is the greatest patriot who serves his country. He is the greatest scientist whose genius ministers to the relief of humanity. He is the greatest philosopher whose work in the mine of truth results in the more extended coinage of principle. He is the greatest ruler who knows how to serve his people in ruling them. It is related of Xunus, one of the earliest emperors of China, that, when dying, he addressed his son who was to succeed him as follows: "Take this scepter, due to your virtue and merits; remember that you are the father of your people, that you are to deal with them as with your children; that the people are not born to serve you, but that you are born and designed to serve them; and that a king is alone raised up above all the rest that he might alone be able to serve all."

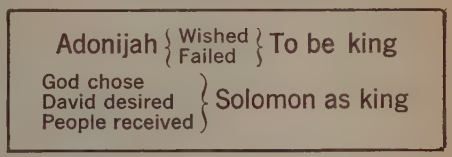
The perfection of service (Golden Text). "'Tis not what man does which exalts him, but what man would do! See the king—I would help him, but can not, the wishes fall through. Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich, to fill up his life, starve my own out, I would;—knowing which, I know my service is perfect." So sings David in Robert Browning's Saul. The perfect service is the love service. It was the love element in Mary's act of breaking her alabaster box of ointment that has touched the centuries with the fragrance of the deed. It was the love element that made the widow's two mites worth more than all the treasure of the wealthy. It was the love element in the sacrifice of Christ that made it meritorious.

The willing service (Golden Text). Obedience is the necessary condition of love service. But it must be a voluntary obedience. Constrained obedience is no obedience. Drafted or mercenary soldiers have no place in the army of the Lord. Coercion in an unknown term in Christ's kingdom. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power" (Psa. 110:3). An old legend states that the east wind complained because the flowers shrank from her and the birds hid in the brush when they heard her coming. "Ungrateful!" howled the east wind. "Do I not fill the sails of treasure ships, that bring balmy spices, shining merchandise, and all the precious gifts of far-off lands? The gold and the silver, the gems of the earth and of ocean, are they not wafted by me to these shores? Yet love never greets me. I find a barren land and a reproachful silence, whenever I come." "Ah, my stern brother," replied the sun, struggling through a leaden sky, "read aright the reason of your reception. Who brings the piercing blast and destructive blight? Who hides the azure of the heavens, and dims the beauty of the earth? Who tries to veil me with impenetrable gloom, so that I can no longer bid the world rejoice? Is not this your work? Riches you may bring, but the gifts of your hand can not atone for your harsh voice and unloving nature. Your presence inspires terror, while it spreads desolation; and where fear is, love is never seen." So Solomon "made silver in Jerusalem as stones," but failed to serve the God of his father "with a perfect heart and with a willing mind." G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—God is faithful in keeping his promises.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE



A beginning. Review briefly the story of Absalom. Bring out the reasons why he made the attempt to seize the kingdom and why he failed to gain it. Note how David mourned over him, even though he had sought to destroy him. Renew the lesson of obedience to parents.

Adonijah. Tell who Adonijah was, and show why he might think he ought to be king. He seemed to be in haste to have his father out of the way. He was like Absalom in beauty and he was like him in his wicked ambition. Draw a square representing the city of Jerusalem and on the outside to the right show the place where Adonijah and his followers were having a feast, that he might be made king. His father did not know what Adonijah was doing until Bath-sheba told him. It was a sad thing for David to think of, that a son of his would deceive him, dishonor him and try to take the kingdom away from him. We shall soon see that Adonijah failed to become king of Israel.

Solomon chosen. Recall the fact that the Lord had declared that David's son Solomon would be made king after him. David remembered it, and so did Bath-sheba, Solomon's mother. Nathan, the prophet, knew it, and when he heard what Adonijah was attempting to do, he let Bath-sheba know. Note that Absalom had tried to be king and failed, and Adonijah also was trying and was about to fail. These failures were because they tried to do something against what God had planned. Solomon was the Lord's choice for king.

David's desire. Tell the story of Bath-sheba's plea before David, and of Nathan's visit to the king. David desired that the Lord's will should be done and that Solomon should be king. Locate a point to the left of the square, marking Jerusalem, as the place where Solomon was taken by David's people and anointed king. David arranged all this plan even though he was old and feeble, and could not go out himself. He directed others.

Solomon made king. Note the different things that were done to show that David appointed Solomon king. He had Solomon ride upon his own mule. He had Zadok, the priest, anoint him king. He ordered the trumpet to be blown to call the attention of the people to what was being done. Note that the people were glad to receive Solomon as king. It must have been a great shout that went up, for it seemed to shake the ground. The Lord was pleased to have Solomon king, and we shall learn later how wise the young king was, and how well he ruled. Adonijah was a failure. Note how anxious he was to gain Solomon's favor, that his life might be spared. The king spared his life and told him to go home. Adonijah is a warning to us all.

LESSON III

HOME READINGS.—Mon., July 12.—Solomon chooses wisdom.—1 Kings 3: 4-15. Tu.—Call of wisdom.—Prov. 8: 1-11. Wed.—Christ the wisdom of God.—1 Cor. 1: 18-25. Th.—Place of wisdom.—Job 28: 12-28. Fr.—Riches of wisdom.—Rom. 11: 25-36. Sat.—Wisdom and foolishness.—1 Cor. 3: 18-23. Su.—Wisdom from above.—James 3: 13-18.

Solomon Chooses Wisdom.—1 Kings 3: 4-15.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 9, 10)

SUPT.—4 And the king went to Gib'e-on to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Sol'o-mon offer upon that altar.

School.—5 In Gib'e-on the Lord appeared to Sol'o-mon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

6 And Sol'o-mon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant Da'vid my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

7 And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of Da'vid my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Sol'o-mon had asked this thing.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father Da'vid did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

15 And Sol'o-mon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Je-ru'sa-lem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

*AMERICAN REVISION

4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. 5 In Gibeon Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6 And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great lovingkindness, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great lovingkindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 7 And now, O Jehovah my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. 8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9 Give thy servant therefore an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this thy great people?

10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern justice; 12 behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there hath been none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. 13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee, all thy days. 14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. 15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream: and he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and offered up burnt-offerings, and offered peace-offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Prov. 9: 10.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord gives true wisdom to those who earnestly ask him for it.**

TOPIC.—**A prayer for wisdom.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Solomon's sacrifice. II. The Lord's offer. III. Solomon's choice. IV. Gifts bestowed.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 1014.**

PLACES.—**Gibeon; Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—David lived but a short time after Solomon took the throne of Israel. The young king's reign commenced under favorable conditions. Peace had come to prevail throughout the borders of the nation. Adonijah, who had plotted to acquire the throne, was still alive, as also were Abiathar, the priest, and Joab, the commander of the army, who had taken Adonijah's side in his conspiracy. Early in Solomon's reign Adonijah began a course to gain the throne and was promptly executed, and Abiathar was deposed and banished. Joab was slain for his part in Adonijah's plot. Zadok was made high priest in Abiathar's place, and Benaiah was placed at the head of Solomon's military forces. By these measures the kingdom was firmly established in Solomon's hands. He, a little while after he began to reign, made an alliance with the king of Egypt and married his daughter. This was the first relation of the Israelites with the Egyptians after the exodus. The children of Israel were directly forbidden to intermarry with the Canaanitish nations, but other foreign nations were not specified in the prohibition; hence Solomon did not act contrary to the letter of the law in taking an Egyptian wife, although he may have transgressed the spirit of it. In the early part of his reign he was deeply religious,

COMMENTARY.—I. SOLOMON'S SACRIFICE (v. 4). **4. to Gibeon**—Gibeon was five or six miles northwest of Jerusalem, and was a sacred place because the tabernacle and brazen altar were there (2 Chron. 1:3, 5). **the great high place**—Idolatrous nations chose high hilltops as places for their religious ceremonies, perhaps from the supposition that such elevations were nearer their gods. Israel had not yet built the house of the Lord, and they were worshiping Jehovah in high places (1 Kings 3:2, 3). Gibeon was the most sacred place at that time in all Israel. **a thousand burnt offerings**—This was a great religious gathering. Multitudes of Israelites went to Gibeon with Solomon to engage in the public worship of the Lord. A small portion only of the slaughtered animal was consumed as a burnt-offering to the Lord, and the remaining portions were eaten by the priests and distributed among the worshipers. Many priests must have been engaged in sacrificing the animals, and there can be no doubt that the people entered heartily into the worship there offered to the Lord. "In 2 Chron. 1:2, 3 we are told a little more about this sacrifice. The king had consulted all the people, and the great officers, and went up in a solemn procession with all the congregation. This accounts for the abundance of the offerings. After this occasion we hear no more of sacrifices at Gibeon."—*Lumby.*

II. THE LORD'S OFFER (v. 5). **5. the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream**—There are many instances in the scriptures of the Lord's appearing to individuals in dreams to communicate to them a knowledge of his will. Such dreams are to be carefully distinguished from ordinary dreams, for the ordinary dream has no significance. It can reasonably be supposed that Solomon realized the weight of the responsibility that was upon him as king of Israel, and his prayer had been that the Lord would grant him the needed help to meet that responsibility. **ask what I shall give thee**—The offer made by the Lord to the youthful king was comprehensive and unlimited. The Lord, in this statement, laid his resources at Solomon's disposal. All that the human heart could rightfully desire is included. It is easy to imagine what multitudes would choose if they were given such a privilege. The Lord knew what was in Solomon's heart when he laid open his resources to him.

III. SOLOMON'S CHOICE (vs. 6-9). **6. Solomon said**—He said this in his dream. **hast shewed great mercy**—Solomon prefaced his choice with humble acknowledgments to God for mercies bestowed, and a confession of his own inability to fill the position in which he had placed him. The Lord had shown great mercy to David throughout his eventful career. **in uprightness of heart**—David's course for the most part was right, and for the sins into which he fell, he had deeply and fully repented. **hast given him a son to sit on his throne**—David had several sons in all, but the Lord definitely declared that his son Solomon should be king. **7. I am but a little child**—Solomon was probably about twenty years of age at this time. He was a man grown, yet he realized that in experience in great affairs he was but a child. In this frame of mind he could accept of the wisdom that God would directly or indirectly impart, and his sense of the need of assistance was evidence of his fitness to rule. **to go out or come in**—In these words the king declared to the Lord that he did not know how to conduct the affairs of the kingdom. **8. thou hast chosen**—God had chosen Abraham, and the people of Israel were his descendants. **that cannot be numbered**—Israel had come to be a great nation. According to David's numbering there were 1,300,000 men of war (2 Sam. 24:9), and upon that basis there were possibly 6,000,000 inhabitants of Israel. **9. an understanding heart**—This was a noble choice. It was unselfish. He might have chosen popularity, wealth, vast dominion or long life, but he left himself out of the consideration to the extent that he chose for the highest welfare of his subjects. **to judge....people**—The Oriental mind always associates the functions of the judge with the monarch, as he is expected to hear and decide important cases.—*Whedon.*

IV. GIFTS BESTOWED (vs. 10-15). **10. the speech pleased the Lord**—The Lord was pleased with the nobility, sincerity, unselfishness, and devotion to Israel, expressed in Solomon's request. This opened the way for the Lord to bestow the best gift and to supplement it with other desirable gifts. **11. hast not asked for thyself,** etc.—Solomon, in his simplicity, had a clear understanding of values, and this understanding the Lord quickly recognized. The Lord made plain what things human nature prized highly. **to discern judgment**—The ability to hear causes, to weigh evidence and to render just judgment. **12. I have done according to thy words**—Solomon's request was granted. **I have given thee a wise....heart**—God gave him ability to know and to judge. This wisdom was both supernatural and natural. We know that Solomon studied and searched, and thus stored up knowledge as others do, but the Lord gave him a breadth of comprehension and an insight that he did not possess before that eventful night. **none like thee**—Read 1 Kings 4:29-34 for a statement regarding Solomon's grasp of mind. **13. that which thou hast not asked**—He had asked for something that would be of the greatest advantage to others, and the Lord gave him those things that would be desirable for himself. There is a lesson in what not to pray for, as well as in what to pray for. The words of Jesus in Matt. 6:33 are called to mind by Solomon's choice and what came of it. **both riches, and honour**—Solomon's was a magnificent reign. **14. if thou wilt walk in my ways**—God gave promise of long life to the king, but it was conditional. The sacred historian had to record the painful fact later, that Solomon was drawn away from the service of the true God to a great extent by the associations he formed. What might Solomon have been, had he fully followed the Lord all his days! **lengthen thy days**—He failed to meet the conditions and only lived about sixty years. **15. it was a dream**—Even though it was a dream, it was a divine communication to Solomon. The choice the king expressed in his dream, was the choice of his waking heart. Wisdom was his to rule Israel wisely, and riches and honor were in store for him. **stood before the ark of the covenant**—David had brought the ark to Jerusalem in the early part of his reign.

QUESTIONS.—At about what age did Solomon begin to reign? Where did he go to sacrifice? How great a sacrifice did he make? Who went with him? What did the Lord tell him to ask? What choice did Solomon express? What reasons did he give for making this request? What did the Lord say to Solomon? What promises did the Lord make to Solomon? What is the source of wisdom?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. Points of contact with the preceding lesson. (1) Solomon was proving himself capable. (2) His remarkable dream came in the early part of his reign. 2. Dangers threatening from Adonijah's course. 3. The death of Adonijah and Joab. 4. The unjust banishment of Abiathar. 5. Solomon showed resolution and promptness. 6. Shimei's death. 7. Relations into which Solomon entered with Egypt. 8. This affinity was a beginning which in later years seriously affected Solomon.

II. THEME.—The excellence of wisdom.

III. SOLOMON'S DEVOTION TO GOD.—1. Sacrifices were offered in different places, as there was no house of the Lord. 2. The ark of the covenant was in Jerusalem; the tabernacle and brazen altar, at Gibeon. 3. The great procession going up to Gibeon with Solomon. 4. The great sacrifice. 5. The importance of great religious gatherings. 6. Solomon's sincerity in his religious exercises.

IV. THE OFFER MADE TO SOLOMON.—1. Solomon honored the Lord and the Lord honored him. 2. God recognized the devotion of Solomon and his desires. 3. The offer. (1) Made by the Lord. (2) Comprehensive. (3) It showed the Lord's confidence in Solomon. (4) In reality it was a promise. (5) A test of Solomon's confidence in God.

V. THE CHOICE.—1. Solomon's acknowledgment of God's mercy to his father. 2. His confession of his need. 3. His realization of the great responsibility resting upon him. 4. His unselfishness. 5. He asked for wisdom to rule his people well. 6. The Lord's approval. 7. His request granted. 8. Wealth, honor and long life promised. 9. The sacrifice at Jerusalem.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**A prayer for wisdom.**

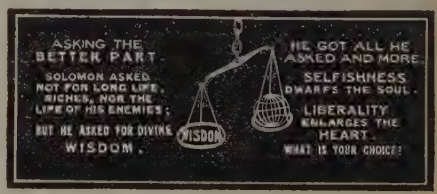
I. Based on personal need.
II. Made in behalf of others.

I. Based on personal need. The lesson before us is the record of a dream which Solomon had at Gibeon, a celebrated place in Old Testament history. It reveals what then agitated and filled his soul. It affords evidence of the genuine theocratic spirit in which the son of David had been educated. The young king seemed overwhelmed with a sense of responsibility. He was about to succeed a father who had been renowned as a warrior, a statesman and a ruler of men. He was about to reign over a numerous and prosperous people. The dream seemed to be according to the measure of his capacity. His great soul took within the ample range of its conception, the whole Jewish nation, the eternal Ruler of the universe and the everlasting principles of moral obligation. The divine communication at the beginning of the dream was Solomon's authority to pray according to the strongest desires of his heart. His dominant thought, from which spontaneously sprang his prayer, was that of the immensity of his task and his incapacity to perform it. He foresaw that there would be snares not easy to avoid, difficulties hard to surmount. He dared not go forth without answered prayer. He recognized that God had made him king, but so far as wisdom and ability were concerned he was still a child. When God came to him with so great an offer, the first thing that came to Solomon's mind was the image and memory, the life and character of his father. His record was a guide to a right choice. He referred to what God had done for his father as an example and pledge of what he could do for him. It was not presumptuous for Solomon to take God at his word. It was not his own merit that gave him courage to pray as he did, but the divine mercy and grace which his father had so richly experienced. His reference to former histories in the household and the realm gave evidence that he was alert and thoughtful. Solomon considered his youth and inexperience. His prayer was short, but it expressed living, childlike faith, simple and substantial, heartfelt and true. His choice was an act of judgment, a decision of his will.

II. Made in behalf of others. Solomon felt that, to take the place of his father and direct the destinies of Israel, he needed that wisdom which God alone could bestow. It was no little matter to be called upon to govern so important a nation as Israel. Solomon knew that without God's guiding Spirit he could not do it successfully. He therefore chose wisdom and knowledge to qualify himself for the task. Higher wisdom was needed for higher work, for guiding and governing a nation. Solomon had a lofty ideal of kingly rule before him. He wished to rule God's people well for their own good, and the glory of their supreme Ruler. His prayer was that he might be just in judgment and equitable in law. His prayer displayed a deep interest in the welfare of his subjects. God was well pleased because Solomon chose what would enable him to be serviceable to others. His choice marked a new epoch. Before his time all kingly power was marked by standing armies, by riches and pomp. Under his reign was demonstrated for the first time the power of the brain in the conquests of nations and men. The prayer of his dream was answered in his actual history. That Solomon "loved the Lord" was the best and greatest thing that could be said about him. When God put the character test upon him, he revealed the truth of his own relation to God and his attitude toward men. His was the reverent prayer of a royal petitioner. It was characterized by gratitude, solemnity, hopefulness and humility. Spiritual interests were supreme. Spiritual motives were predominant. The faithfulness of God was his stimulus to prayer. In David's dying charge to Solomon he reminded him of God's words, "If thy children take heed." Solomon made that declaration the basis of his plea with God in his prayer for personal enlightenment for the sake of God's people. Solomon's choice of the best gifts proved him worthy of lesser gifts. God's beneficence exceeded his requests.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The measure of a man (v. 5). Hugh Black says, "Tell me your dreams, and I will read the riddle of your life. Tell me your prayers, and I will write the history of a soul. Tell me your askings, and I will tell you your gettings. Tell me what you seek, and I will tell you what you are. I do not wish to know your possessions—only your wants. I do not care to know what you have—only what you have not, and desire to have; not your attainments, but what you have not yet attained and follow after. That which comes to you in your victories by day and your dreams by night, the ideal you set before you, the things you approve as excellent, what you seek after and have given your heart to, these are the measure of the man."

Choice involves character (v. 9). It is significant that Solomon's request for wisdom applies wholly to his kingly work and has no reference to personal holiness. The extent of power is the measure of responsibility. Solomon felt his responsibility, but did not seek the personal purity necessary to the conserving of that power. Hence, his record is one of the saddest in the Bible. Life is a series of choices. It is better to be Moses, herding sheep in the desert, than Pharaoh on the throne. It is better to be Abraham camping in the rugged mountains, than Lot dwelling in the fertile and well-watered plain. It is better to be Daniel, sleeping on lions' manes, than Nebuchadnezzar pacing restlessly up and down his palace hall. It is better to be Paul in a Roman dungeon, than a Nero in his purple. "I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit" (Eccl. 1:16, 17).

True wisdom. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Golden Text). Carlyle says, "Wisdom is to look through the shows of things, into things themselves." Wisdom is greater than knowledge. Knowledge signifies the accumulation of facts, the gathering and retention of information. "But wisdom represents that finer power, that higher characteristic of mind, which suggests the proper application of facts, the right use of knowledge, the correct direction of our faculties." Wisdom teaches one to think as God would think in his place. No person can ever become truly wise, who does not begin with God, the fountain of knowledge; and the one whose mind is influenced by the fear and love of God will learn more in a month than others will in a year. Was it wisdom for Solomon to ask for discernment between good and evil, and then choose evil all the rest of his life? Is it wise to feed and pamper the body and starve the soul? Is it wise to tear down the barns and build greater in which to store the harvests, and lay up no treasure in heaven? Is it wise for nations to spend millions for battleships and armament, and forget the words of the Prince of Peace? Is it wise to forget God, blaspheme his name, profane his Sabbaths and break his law, and then expect his blessing? Nay, verily. Across the threshold of Wisdom's seven-pillared house appears a sinless Man with a pain-marred visage, who is truth incarnate. His word is the light and life of men.

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—True wisdom comes from God.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

SOLOMON, THE WISE MAN

Solomon { Served the Lord / Asked for wisdom / Had wisdom, honor, wealth

The wise man. From the simple Bible questions which the little folks are taught, the children have learned about the wisdom of Solomon. Let the class tell the story of Solomon's being made king. He was but little more than a boy when he was placed on the throne and had to rule a great nation. He was a wise ruler and was a great man. Turn in your Bible to Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Songs of Solomon, and show the children the books he wrote. They may have heard the expression, "As wise as Solomon," or, "Another Solomon." People do not become wise by chance or without an effort. Note the fact that the highest wisdom is that which comes from God.

Solomon served the Lord. Draw on the board a square to represent Jerusalem, and a little distance above and to the left a circle to represent Gibeon. Give a word picture of Solomon and a vast multitude of Israelites marching from Jerusalem toward Gibeon. There are great droves of cattle or flocks of sheep being taken along. Can the children tell what was to be done with them? The tabernacle and the brazen altar were at Gibeon, and there was to be a great sacrifice to the Lord. Parts of the animals were burned on the altar and the other parts were eaten by the priests and the people. Solomon served the Lord and he wished to lead all his people to serve him also.

How Solomon became wise. Tell how the Lord spoke to people anciently in dreams. Tell of Jacob's dream at Bethel and of the dreams Joseph had. The Lord told Solomon to ask him what he should give him. What would the children choose to receive if they could have what they wanted? Note that Solomon had a great work to do. He was young and felt that he was not wise enough to rule Israel well; hence he asked the Lord to teach him how to serve his people as king. Solomon showed his humility and unselfishness in the choice he made. Others would have asked for wealth and power. We are permitted to choose what we shall have from the Lord. He desires us to choose the best things. He would have us seek him and be wise to serve him. The Lord made Solomon wise and he will give us wisdom if we ask him.

Honor, wealth, long life. Show the verse to the class that tells that the Lord was pleased with Solomon's choice. He not only gave him wisdom, but he also gave him riches and honor, and promised him long life if he would carefully obey him. Turn to Matt. 6:33 and read what Jesus said at one time: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The Lord gave him many good things because he asked for the best things for others. It is not the selfish that have the best things, but the unselfish.

LESSON IV

HOME READINGS.—Mon., July 19.—Solomon dedicates the temple.—1 Kings 8:22-30. Tu.—Solomon blesses the congregation.—1 Kings 8:54-61. Wed.—The human temple.—1 Cor. 3:10-17. Th.—The temple of God.—John 2:13-22. Fr.—Greater than the temple.—Matt. 12:1-8. Sat.—The more perfect tabernacle.—Heb. 9:1-14. Su.—Spiritual communion.—Jer. 31:27-34.

Solomon Dedicates the Temple.—1 Kings 8: 1-53. Print 8: 22-30.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 23, 24)

SUPT.—22 And Sol'o-mon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Is'ra-el, and spread forth his hands toward heaven:

School.—23 And he said, Lord God of Is'ra-el, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart:

24 Who hast kept with thy servant Da'vid my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.

25 Therefore now, Lord God of Is'ra-el, keep with thy servant Da'vid my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Is'ra-el; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me.

26 And now, O God of Is'ra-el, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant Da'vid my father.

27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?

28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day:

29 That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.

30 And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Is'ra-el, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

*AMERICAN REVISION

22 And Solomon stood before the altar of Jehovah in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven; 23 and he said, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath; who keepest covenant and lovingkindness with thy servants, that walk before thee with all their heart; 24 who hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou didst promise him: yea, thou spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thy hand, as it is this day. 25 Now therefore, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel, if only thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me as thou hast walked before me. 26 Now therefore, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.

27 But will God in very deed dwell on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded! 28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Jehovah my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee this day; 29 that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place whereof thou hast said, My name shall be there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall pray toward this place. 30 And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: yea, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place; and when thou hearest, forgive.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. Isa. 56: 7.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**God dwells among his people.**

TOPIC.—**The temple dedicated.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Bringing in the ark. II. Blessing the people. III. Solomon's prayer.**

TIME.—**B. C. 1004.**

PLACE.—**Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—Solomon's great work, and that for which his reign is most noteworthy, was the building of the temple with which his name is connected. David had made magnificent preparations for this building, and Solomon entered heartily upon the undertaking. Hiram, king of Tyre, cooperated enthusiastically with Solomon in the plan, furnishing timber and stone, and placing his skill in the execution of fine work at his disposal. The temple was built upon Mount Moriah, the southeastern hill of Jerusalem. A large space was leveled off for this structure. The temple itself was ninety feet long, counting a cubit eighteen inches, thirty feet wide, and thirty feet high. It was built facing the east, hence its longer dimension was east and west. The porch extended the whole width of the temple proper and was fifteen feet deep and one hundred eighty feet high. In front of the temple and forming a part of the porch were set up two pillars, called Jachin, meaning, the Lord will establish, and Boaz, strength. The holy place, which was entered directly from the porch, was thirty feet wide and sixty feet long. Beyond this was the most holy place, thirty feet in width, thirty in length and thirty in height. The dimensions of the temple were double those of the tabernacle. Chambers were built against the temple on the north, west and south sides. Enclosing the temple proper was the court of the priests and surrounding this was another court, known as the court of the Gentiles. Inside the court of the priests, or the inner court, and in front of the porch of the temple, was the great altar of burnt-offerings and between that and the porch was the brazen sea. In the holy place were the golden candlestick, the altar of incense and the table of shewbread. In the most holy place was the ark of the covenant. There were two cherubim whose wings met in the center over the mercy-seat, which was the cover of the ark of the covenant. Their outstretched wings extended the entire width of the room. The time occupied in building the temple was seven years. The stone and timber were prepared before being brought to the place, so that there was no sound of hammer while the parts were being placed in position. The total cost of the temple is estimated variously from one bil-

lion to several billion dollars. Much gold was used in overlaying different parts of the structure.

COMMENTARY.—I. BRINGING IN THE ARK (vs. 1-11). The length of time occupied in building the temple was seven years. It was finished in the eighth month and was dedicated in the seventh month of the following year. The intervening eleven months may have been occupied in preparing the furnishings of the temple. At the time of the dedication there were assembled the leaders of all the tribes of Israel at Jerusalem, for this was to be one of the greatest events in the history of the nation. Priests carried the ark of the covenant from Zion, where David had placed it during the early part of his reign, to Moriah. They went eastward down into the Tyropœon valley and up on the other side to Moriah and the ark was deposited in the most holy place of the temple. In the ark were the tables of the covenant. The ark of the covenant was the symbol of the divine presence, and God manifested his presence in the temple after the sacred ark was placed therein. The cloud of glory filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests were not able to minister. It was a most satisfactory evidence that the Lord was pleased with the efforts his people had put forth in his service and for his honor, that the divine glory filled the temple. They thus knew that their work was acceptable to God.

II. BLESSING THE PEOPLE (vs. 12-21). A platform had been erected for the occasion, and Solomon stood upon it to address the congregation, and kneeled upon it to pray. He first addressed the Lord, declaring that he had built for him a permanent place of abode. He then turned toward the people and blessed them, while they stood to hear his words. He gave the history of the building of the house. The thought of this enterprise was in the heart of David, but, because of his being much engaged in war, he was not allowed to build the temple. The Lord gave David the promise, however, that a son of his would accomplish the work. God commended David for his desire and interest in the matter. Solomon testified that the Lord had placed him upon the throne as his father's successor, and that he had built the house of the Lord. The king made particular reference to the ark of the covenant. The most holy place of the temple was set apart as a resting-place for the ark. This contained the covenant which God made with his people. This covenant was embodied in the tables of the Ten Commandments.

III. SOLOMON'S PRAYER (vs. 22-53). **22. Solomon stood before the altar**—From the account in 2 Chron. 6:12, 13 we learn that he stood upon a platform and then kneeled down to pray. **spread forth his hands**—This was a common custom in prayer, and now frequently those who are engaged in earnest prayer raise their hands toward heaven. **23. he said**—The prayer of Solomon is recorded, and is the longest which is preserved to us in the scriptures. **no God like thee**—Solomon used adoration as well as supplication in his prayer. He showed his confidence in the God of Israel; and if the congregation joined heartily with him in his prayer, they were far from being inclined toward idolatry. He ascribed to him faithfulness and mercy. **with all their heart**—The condition upon which men then, as now, received the divine favor was to walk before him in sincerity, devotion and faith, or with all the heart. **24. hast fulfilled it**—The king gave God the glory for what had been done. He had fulfilled the promise which he had made to David. **25. shall not fail thee a man**—As the Lord had fulfilled the promise to David regarding the temple, so the king besought the Lord that the promise concerning a succession of kings to occupy the throne would be fulfilled. This promise was conditional upon David's descendants' being obedient to the Lord. **so that thy children**—"If only thy children."—*R. V.* **26. and now**—Solomon was in earnest to have his prayer answered, and he repeated his petition.

27. will God indeed dwell on the earth—This question shows that Solomon had an exalted conception of God. Could it be that the Almighty would occupy a dwelling-place among men? **heaven of heavens**—The wide extent of creation, the vast expanse of the heavens. **cannot contain thee**—This is an expression of faith in God's omnipresence. He had created the "heaven of heavens," and he was greater than his works. **28. have thou respect**—The Hebrew is, "Thou wilt have respect."—*Cam. Bib.* **29. my name shall be there**—This is equivalent to saying that God's presence would be in the temple, for his name indicates himself with all his attributes. **toward this place**—For the king was not in the temple, but looking toward it, as would be the case with all future worshipers except the priests, who were allowed to enter into the building. Hence it came to pass that in foreign lands the Israelite turned his face in the direction of Jerusalem.—*Cam. Bib.* **30. in heaven thy dwelling place**—While the temple, just being dedicated, was to be God's visible abode to his people, that is, his presence was to be manifested there, yet he was to be thought of as having his abode in heaven. **when thou hearest, forgive**—Solomon set forth in his prayer one of the most important works of Jehovah when he spoke of his forgiving sin. God alone can do this, and man's condition would be deplorable indeed if he could receive no mercy from God. "With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption" (Psa. 130:7).

31-53. In the remainder of his prayer Solomon besought the Lord for mercy for his people when they should be in distress. Their troubles would come as a result of their failure to obey and honor him. This prayer called for forgiveness for the people on condition that they confessed their sins, turned from them and asked the Lord for pardon, praying with their faces toward Jerusalem. The prayer covered times of drought, famine, pestilence and war. Not only might the prayer of the Israelite be heard, but even the stranger, who turned toward God's people and prayed with his face toward the temple, would receive mercy. After the prayer was ended, Solomon pronounced a benediction upon the people. He referred to the fact that the Lord had separated Israel to be a people for himself and had taken a constant and careful interest in them. They were his inheritance. He had delivered them from Egyptian bondage and made them a nation. They were his delight.

QUESTIONS.—In what year of Solomon's reign was the building of the temple begun? How long was it in being built? Describe the preparation of the materials. Where was the temple built? Give the size of the temple. Describe the parts of the temple. From what place was the ark of the covenant taken? What did Solomon say to the people before he prayed? For what did he pray?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. Solomon's choice of wisdom and what came as a result. 2. An exhibition of his wisdom. 3. The breadth of his comprehension. 4. The building of the temple. (1) David's part in making preparations for it. (2) The location. (3) Hiram's part in the work. (4) The form and dimensions. (5) Compare the temple with the tabernacle. (6) The length of time occupied in building it. (7) The cost. (8) Solomon's energy and devotion in the work.

II. THEME.—Dedicating the house of the Lord.

III. BRINGING IN THE ARK.—1. The purpose of the ark. 2. Places where the ark had been. 3. The procession accompanying the ark. 4. The sacrifices offered. 5. The ark deposited in the most holy place. 6. The house of the Lord was filled with the divine glory after the ark was brought in. 7. The ark in its permanent abiding-place. 8. The wisdom of giving proper attention to sacred things.

IV. THE HISTORY OF THE TEMPLE REVIEWED.—1. Solomon's address to the people. 2. The declaration that he had built a settled place for the Lord. 3. A benediction pronounced upon the people. 4. God's choice of David as king. 5. David's desire to build the house of the Lord. 6. God's promise to David. 7. Solomon's completion of the task.

V. SOLOMON'S PRAYER.—1. His position before the altar. 2. His attitude. 3. Adoration. 4. God's people, Israel, were to pray toward the temple. 5. Prayers would be offered under a variety of circumstances. 6. A request that God would answer prayer and deliver his people. 7. Solomon's confidence in God. 8. Qualities of true prayer.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**The temple dedicated.**

I. Divine acceptance symbolized.
II. Pardon for all men contemplated.

I. Divine acceptance symbolized. The primary design of the temple at Jerusalem was to afford a habitation for the ark of the covenant and for him whose covenant it contained. It was the meeting-place for God and man, the place of intercession and atonement. The supreme moment in the history of the sacred building came when the cloud which symbolized the assured presence of Jehovah, filled the house. It testified to God's acceptance of the temple and its services. It proclaimed his readiness to hear prayer. It inspired and confirmed faith. It restored significance to old symbols. It introduced a supernatural element. It afforded to the minds of all a visible image and the glorious appearance of God's having descended into this temple to make it his dwelling-place. It betokened the divine approval upon Israel in their purpose to exalt his name before all nations, and to observe to do all things according to his law. The appearance of the cloud was the most important event of the day. The abiding presence of Jehovah in Israel was the most significant proof of their well-being. The consecration of the temple was the grandest religious ceremony of the old covenant. In it, Solomon, as the king chosen of God, represented the entire theocracy. He was one in heart and interest with those over whom he ruled. He did not take to himself the whole credit for originating the design of the temple. He ascribed to David, his father, the ideal which had become the accomplished work of his son. God's covenant with David brought to Solomon much of his glory and honor. David had been the military hero and champion of his nation. Solomon was to be the organizer and administrator. Never did Solomon appear so much "in all his glory" as on the day of the dedication of the temple. He was fully alive to the solemn and momentous meaning of what was taking place on that day.

II. Pardon for all men contemplated. Solomon's chief desire was that all people might know the Lord. Israel's mission was to make known to mankind the God who had revealed himself in wondrous power to them. The whole Mosaic economy was built on the grand truth of the absolute world-wide supremacy of Jehovah. Solomon's conception of the personality and power of God was sublime. Throughout his prayer he identified the house of God with all human interests. He spread before God the needs of all people and asked from him deliverance in every time of need. He enumerated specific cases in which the merciful interposition of God would be required. He recognized distinctly the fact that all things which had ever occurred to try the faith, the patience, the virtue of mankind would occur again and again. He entered into various supposed conditions of need and suffering among his people as a true intercessor in their behalf. Sincere piety blended with deepest humility. His royalty assumed the aspect of fatherhood. The praying king was one of the most remarkable features in the scene of the dedication of the temple. He was the central figure. Both priest and prophet gave place to him. His supplication took a wider range than the needs of Israel alone. Kindly human sympathy was a marked characteristic of Solomon's prayer. It overflowed national prejudice. Simple, touching and beautiful were the words of that first prayer offered in the temple. Forgiveness was the first thing asked for. Solomon regarded it as most needed, most important. The Hebrew king might not sacrifice or burn incense, but he might lead the prayers both of priests and people on that grandest day in the history of Israel. He prayed as the representative and leader of others. All through that prayer, which stands so prominent in scripture and remarkable in circumstances, reference was made to sin and to the consequent necessity for pardon, since sin is ever the cause of disquietude. It is the moral disease that lurks within the human soul. The relation of the temple to the individual religious life of the people was clearly brought to view. Before the mercy-seat all suppliants stood on one common level, subject to the same dangers and necessities. On that basis Solomon's intercession was acceptable to God. T. B. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

God's dwelling-place (v. 27). A noted skeptic met a stranger one Sunday morning going to church. The following conversation ensued: "Where are you going?" "To church, sir," replied the man. "And what do you do when you get there?" asked the skeptic. "I worship God." "Is your God a great God or a little God?" "He is both," said the man. "How can that be?" "Why, sir," was the answer, "he is so great that the heavens can not contain him, and so little that he can dwell in my heart." The skeptic was confounded by this simple answer, and it had more effect upon him than all the arguments he had read in defense of the Christian religion.

The house of prayer (v. 29). It was a house of prayer that day, but when Christ came it was a den of thieves. How are the mighty fallen! The cooing of doves, the bleating of sheep, the lowing of cattle, the jingle of traders' coin in the place of the voice of prayer and the cry for mercy. And history repeats itself. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" (1 Cor. 3:16). A quarter section of land in this temple, a whole bank in that one, a drove of fat cattle in another, an automobile in still another, and no room for prayer. Is it any wonder that we are fast becoming a prayerless and godless nation?

The house of mercy (v. 30). It is only now and then that the thrones of earth are thrones of mercy. But God's throne is where his glory dwelleth and is a throne of mercy (Heb. 4:16). With what awe the mind contemplates that power that could speak a world into existence, hang it upon nothing and perpetuate it without effort! With what wonder does the mind contemplate that power which kindles the fire in countless suns at a breath, and lines the milky way with millions of worlds! Yet it is no easier to comprehend the greatness of that mercy which puts out the fires of sin and writes the names of the prisoners of death in the book of life.

The house of worship. Necessary as was the temple, convenient as it is to have comfortable houses of worship, the time has come when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4:23). "If we can hear the voice of God in all sounds, see the sweep of his will in all motions, catch hints of his taste in all beauty, follow the reach of his imagination in all heights and distances, and trace the delicate ministry of his love in all the little graces and utilities that spring and blossom about us as thick as the grass, we shall tread God's world with reverent feet, as if it were a temple. The pure and solemn eyes of the indwelling soul will look forth upon us from everything which his hands have made. Nature will be to us, not some dark tissue of cloth of mystery flowing from some unseen loom, but a vesture of light in which God has enrobed himself; and with worshipful fingers we shall rejoice to touch even the hem of his garment." Some years ago I wandered up Alder Creek Canyon in southern California. The precipitous sides of massive rock, the flower-strewn, fern-scented canyon, the stately pines above, the dashing, rollicking mountain-stream,—what a walk it was! Lonely, you say! No, a thousand times, No. There were voices on every side; there were songs filling the air; everything was chaste and pure; God was in his temple. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—It is good to worship the Lord in his house.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

THE TEMPLE FINISHED
FURNISHED
FILLED WITH GLORY

SOLOMON'S PRAYER

The temple finished. Review one part of the life of David, king of Israel. He wished to build a house of the Lord. Recall the making of the tabernacle in the wilderness of Sinai. This was the place where the divine presence was manifested for hundreds of years. It was only a tent made of skins. David wished to make a good house, that would be strong and beautiful. Draw on the board a figure, the length of which is three times its width, and divide it by a line across it, making one room twice as large as the other. The large room represents the holy place of the temple and the other the most holy place. There may be drawn a line enclosing a space all around the temple, and another line may be drawn enclosing a space all around that space. The inner space and the temple were used by the priests and the outer one by the people. Tell the story of the building of this structure.

The temple furnished. Solomon was very careful to have all the furnishings of the temple just right. There were no seats in it as there are in churches now. There was an altar for burning incense, also a table and a golden candlestick in the large room in the temple proper. In the inner court there were an altar for burnt-offerings and a brazen sea to contain water for use by the priests. The Lord had many years before this given directions to Moses with respect to building the tabernacle and furnishing it. Solomon built and furnished the temple on the same general plan. The temple was to be permanent, while the tabernacle was temporary. Give a description of the tabernacle.

The temple filled. Tell about the ark of the covenant. It formerly contained the tables of the commandments, the pot of manna and Aaron's rod that budded, but now it had only the tables of the commandments in it. Describe the carrying of the ark from the hill Zion to the temple across the Tyropœon valley. There were many animals sacrificed as offerings to the Lord. The priests placed the ark of the covenant in the most holy place, which was the smaller room in the temple. A cloud filled the temple as the priests came out. The glory of the Lord was there.

Solomon's prayer. Tell what Solomon said to the people before he began to pray. This was a wonderful day for Israel. The Lord showed that he was pleased with his house and that he was present in it. Solomon kneeled before the Lord, stretched forth his hands and prayed. He was glad to acknowledge God's greatness and goodness. He prayed that he would be with his people and would hear them when they prayed. Fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice on the altar. God hears us now when we pray to him in earnestness and in faith.

LESSON V

HOME READINGS.—Mon., July 26.—The queen of Sheba visits Solomon.—1 Kings 10: 1-10, 13. Tu.—Seeking the King.—Matt. 2: 1-12. Wed.—Greeks seeking Jesus.—John 12: 20-32. Th.—The glory of Zion.—Zech. 1: 12-17. Fr.—The value of wisdom.—Prov. 4: 1-9. Sat.—The world's wisdom.—Eccl. 1: 12-18. Su.—A greater than Solomon.—Matt. 12: 35-42.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon.—1 Kings 10: 1-10, 13.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 8, 9)

SUPT.—1 And when the queen of She'ba heard of the fame of Sol'o-mon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions.

School.—2 And she came to Je-ru'sa-lem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Sol'o-mon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

3 And Sol'o-mon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

4 And when the queen of She'ba had seen all Sol'o-mon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her.

6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

9 Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Is'ra-el: because the Lord loved Is'ra-el for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

10 And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of She'ba gave to king Sol'o-mon.

13 And king Sol'o-mon gave unto the queen of She'ba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Sol'o-mon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

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1 And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Jehovah, she came to prove him with hard questions. 2 And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones; and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. 3 And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king which he told her not. 4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, 5 and the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of Jehovah; there was no more spirit in her. 6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. 7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me; thy wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame which I heard. 8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. 9 Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because Jehovah loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do justice and righteousness. 10 And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

13 And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own land, she and her servants.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Wisdom is better than rubies. Prov. 8: 11.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord alone bestows true wisdom.**

TOPIC.—**Solomon's queenly visitor.**

OUTLINE.—**I. The fame of Solomon. II. The queen's wonder. III. Her acknowledgment. IV. Gifts exchanged.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 990.**

PLACES.—**Sheba, in the south of Arabia; Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—After Solomon had completed his great building operations, the Lord appeared to him in a vision, as he had appeared to him at the beginning of his reign. In the second vision the Lord told him very emphatically that, if he and his descendants would fully obey him, the kingdom would be preserved unto him and his family perpetually; if, however, there should be a departure from the Lord, the kingdom would be taken away and the house of the Lord would no longer be honored by the nations. The Lord renewed to Solomon the promise he had made to David. The kingdom became strong during these years of Solomon's administration, and was respected by the nations of the world. It was because of this marvelous prosperity that the incident which we study to-day was possible. We shall do well to trace the New Testament references to the visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon and note the spiritual lessons that may be suggested by them.

COMMENTARY.—I. THE FAME OF SOLOMON (vs. 1, 2). **1. the queen of Sheba**—It is quite certain that Sheba was a country in the southern part of Arabia, bordering on the Red Sea. Its wealth and variety of resources are shown by the particulars mentioned in this narrative. Its distance from Jerusalem was one thousand five hundred miles or more. Some commentators have located Sheba in Ethiopia in Africa, but not on sufficient grounds. Research has shown that this country was ruled by a succession of queens. **fame of Solomon**—Even in that age of slow communication between widely-removed places reports spread far and wide. Solomon's ships sailed on the Red Sea, and from this fact the knowledge of his greatness may have reached

Sheba. Caravans were making long journeys for commercial purposes and furnished a means for conveying information. **concerning the name of the Lord**—In relation to the name of the Lord. Solomon's fame was great, but it was great because of what God did for him and his people, and because of what he was enabled to do for God. **to prove him**—To test him. The queen of Sheba was not merely curious; she desired to learn some of the deep wisdom possessed by Solomon. **hard questions**—Such as riddles. This was a common custom among the Arabs of ancient and modern times, to test the sagacity and wisdom of distinguished persons.—*Whedon.* **2. came to Jerusalem**—Her desire to see and hear for herself was great. If it had not been, she would not have gone that great distance. The journey each way must have required two or three months. **great train**—A large number of beasts of burden and attendants. **camels**—The camel was then, and still is, the great beast of burden in the Orient. It is used for carrying persons. The rocking motion of the camel as it walks is not pleasant to one unaccustomed to that means of transportation. **spices**—Arabia is noted for its spices. The queen brought the products of her own country. **all that was in her heart**—She made known to him her purpose in coming, and asked him the questions that were upon her mind. She must have had questions of great importance to ask and matters of deep interest to discuss or she would not have been likely to undertake the long journey.

II. THE QUEEN'S WONDER (vs. 3-5). **3. all her questions**—None of the queen's questions were too difficult for Solomon to answer. The Lord had promised him wisdom and that promise was fulfilled. **not any thing hid from the king**—He knew the correct answers to all her questions. **4. and the house that he had built**—In addition to Solomon's wisdom there were material things that made a deep impression upon the queen's mind. The house which is here mentioned is probably the king's palace, for the narrative passes on immediately to matters pertaining to Solomon's domestic affairs. **5. meat of his table**—The amount and variety of food used by his household were great. It required about three hundred forty bushels of fine flour and seven hundred bushels of meal every day to supply the household. Thirty oxen, a hundred sheep, besides other animals, were used each day (1 Kings 4:22, 23). **sitting of his servants**—Here "servants" signifies the officers and distinguished persons who were privileged to sit at the king's table, and were arranged according to rank and in large numbers at the royal banquets.—*Cam. Bib.* **attendance of his ministers**—This has reference to the arrangement by which each servant had his place about the king's house and stood ready to perform the service required of him. **their apparel**—The servants were well clad in uniform. **cupbearers**—Servants who had charge of the king's plate and who poured out wine for him. **his ascent....unto the house of the Lord**—The temple stood on Mount Moriah and the king's house on Mount Zion across the Tyropœon valley. This valley was anciently a deep ravine, perhaps eighty to one hundred feet in depth. Modern excavations have uncovered the ruins of an ancient viaduct leading across this ravine. It is quite probable that this is the ascent here mentioned. The valley is now mostly filled up, so that there is a comparatively slight depression. **no more spirit in her**—The wisdom and riches of Solomon so far surpassed her expectations that she was astonished beyond measure. The words indicate that she fainted, but we suppose that she was greatly amazed.

III. HER ACKNOWLEDGMENT (vs. 6-9). **6. it was a true report**—This statement implies that she had had doubts about Solomon's reported wisdom and wealth, but freely acknowledges that the report was true. **of thy acts**—This has reference to the king's material greatness, mentioned in verses 4 and 5, rather than to his wisdom, which is particularly stated. She herself had great wealth and a rich kingdom, as is evident from the presents she brought to Solomon, but she saw that his condition was more prosperous than hers. **7. I believed not**—The reports went far beyond what she had ever seen and it was difficult for her to believe them. **mine eyes had seen**—Then she could not help believing. **the half was not told me**—In the reports there had been an attempt to express the facts, but the language had not been strong enough or the queen's comprehension had not been large enough, hence the reality far exceeded her idea of Solomon's wisdom and prosperity. The unconverted man can not comprehend the blessedness of being saved. After conversion more than one has said that salvation was far better than he had imagined, although he had been told about it over and over again.

8. happy—Those who were in the king's presence as relatives, officers, or even as servants, were considered favored. The queen of Sheba looked upon it as a great privilege and honor to be in Solomon's household. **9. blessed be the Lord thy God**—This shows that the queen understood that Solomon recognized all his wisdom and wealth as the gift of God. He was faithful to his God, and it is possible, as Jewish writers claim, that she was converted to the true God through Solomon's influence.—*Peloubet.* Her words show that she acknowledged God as the giver of wisdom and prosperity to Solomon. **because the Lord loved Israel for ever**—The queen believed that God's love for Israel was strong, therefore he placed such a capable man as Solomon upon the throne. She spoke as a woman of intelligence and thoughtfulness, and manifested a reverent disposition.

IV. GIFTS EXCHANGED (vs. 10, 13). **10. an hundred and twenty talents of gold**—The value of a talent of gold is about thirty thousand dollars, hence the present of gold was upward of three and a half million dollars. Her presents were in keeping with her position. Such a bestowment of gifts was in accordance with Oriental custom. **no more such abundance of spices**—This indicates to some extent the productiveness of the queen's country in spices. **13. all her desire**—Solomon not only gave his illustrious guest all the insight and information she wanted; but, according to the Oriental fashion, gave her ample remuneration for the presents she had brought.—*J., F. & B.*

QUESTIONS.—What great works had Solomon done during his reign? Who came to see his greatness? How could his fame reach remote places? What did the queen of Sheba bring to Solomon? How was she impressed with his wisdom and wealth? What respect had she for the true God? How did she regard the Israelitish nation? What did Solomon give her? Why was this interchange of gifts? What New Testament references are there to this event?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The greatness of Solomon's administration. 2. Solomon's second vision and its significance. 3. Solomon's relations with Hiram, king of Tyre. 4. His great yearly sacrifice. 5. His commercial enterprises. 6. In 2 Chron. 9:1-12 is another account of the visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon. 7. The New Testament reference to the queen of Sheba.

II. Theme.—The search for wisdom.

III. A long journey.—1. Sheba's probable location; modern Yemen. 2. The wealth of the country; nature of its resources. 3. Its distance from Jerusalem. 4. The modes of travel in that country. 5. The character of the country to be passed over. 6. The length of time required to make the journey. 7. The report that came to the queen. (1) How it came. (2) The effect upon her. 8. The caravan. (1) Extent. (2) Beasts of burden. 9. Her earnestness.

IV. A great surprise.—1. Picture the approach to Jerusalem from the south. 2. The queen's expectation regarding Solomon's wisdom. 3. Her hard questions were easily answered. 4. The material things that impressed her. (1) The palace. (2) Great provisions. (3) The retinue of officers and servants. (4) The viaduct. 5. Overcome with amazement.

V. A search rewarded.—1. A view of divinely-imparted wisdom. 2. God's favor was upon Israel. 3. Not half had been told the queen. 4. The spiritual lesson. (1) The good news has come to men. (2) The message is but partially comprehended. (3) Those who earnestly wish to gain heavenly wisdom may find it. (4) It is more and better than can be told.

Practical Survey

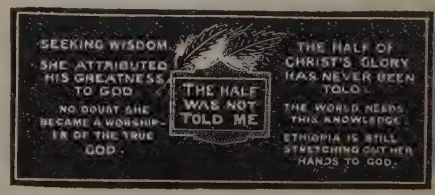
Topic.—**Solomon's queenly visitor.**

I. A model seeker after truth.
II. Recognized God as supreme.

I. A model seeker after truth. The queen of Sheba went to Jerusalem with one dominant, overpowering intention. She was a thoughtful woman, perplexed by the problems of her day, needing the counsel of one wiser than herself. She was true to the needs of her own heart, sincere and genuine. She would not allow the affairs of an empire to drown the cry of her heart. She set every other consideration aside to give attention to her inner life. She was willing to expend labor and money, to endure fatigue, to exercise long patience in order to satisfy the questions uppermost in her mind, questions relating to deep and important problems in religious life. Though a queen, great and rich, cultured and influential, she was obviously troubled at heart about the solemn mystery of existence and wished to have all doubts solved, all questions answered, all anxieties allayed by one who seemed to be specially raised up as the embodiment and teacher of wisdom. In her heart was a void which nothing but the knowledge of God could fill. It was of him she would hear and learn and whom she longed to worship and obey. Her soul was stirred with profoundest questions of life and death and immortality. Her mode of proving Solomon's wisdom was by endeavoring to learn from him. She did not attempt to find fault with or to depreciate any of the endowments of the king. She was more earnest than curious. It was a meeting most picturesque and full of interest, a heathen queen in the presence of Jehovah's anointed king, natural piety seeking revelation's light. The queen of Sheba proved her sincerity by making personal inquiry. Solomon's wisdom lay in the gift of an understanding heart to judge and discern between good and evil. His wisdom was his distinctive characteristic. It was a divine gift which was given in response to his own prayer that he might be made a blessing to others. The queen had an ear to hear. She was prompt to discern and discriminate. She gathered from Solomon a great store of knowledge and of truth.

II. Recognized God as supreme. What the queen of Sheba saw and heard at Jerusalem altogether surpassed her anticipation. She doubtless learned for the first time the fundamental truths of religion. Solomon perceived her perplexity and with perfect skill discovered her longings and unrest and gave satisfactory answers to all her questions. Her labor, fatigue and patience were fully rewarded. The great end of Israel's existence as a nation was to bear witness to the name and character of Jehovah. By the wisdom and energy, combined with the piety of Solomon, this was being accomplished. The works of the Lord were known even in remote lands, so much as to engage the attention of this earnest queen. She went back to her country mentally and spiritually enriched beyond her highest expectations. The reality transcended all reports. The things which she saw did much to enlarge her mind and gave her higher thoughts of God. It is evident that she rejoiced in the fact that she had come to see a man on whom the Spirit of God rested. The prosperity and blessedness of others were a matter of thanksgiving to her. She possessed an open mind with generous apprehensions of faith. She acknowledged and praised Jehovah as the author of Solomon's advancement. She regarded it as God's special favor to Solomon that he was set on the throne of Israel to rule his people. She regarded it as a token of God's great love to Israel that so wise and pious a prince was set over them. Her grateful homage was expressed not only in praise but in generous gifts from her native land to the king of Israel. Solomon's broad policy stood out in striking contrast to the narrowness of some of his contemporaries and successors. The time of this event marked the climax of Israel's strength and prosperity. It is the only event in the reign of Solomon to which reference is made in the New Testament. Jesus made it an important channel of divine instruction. He used it as a reproof to indifference concerning his Messiahship. Upon his authority the narrative is used as an illustration of spiritual truth, as a call to diligent search after divine truth. T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The searching queen (v. 1). There is the search of Jason for the Golden Fleece; the search of Ponce de Leon for the fabled fountain of youth; the search of Sir Galahad for the Holy Grail and of the three Magi for the Christ. We note the marching and counter-marching of Shishak, Alexander, Tamerlane, Cæsar and Napoleon in the lust for power and fame. But in the queen of Sheba we have a searcher after truth. Over weary leagues of desert, braving dangers from man and beast, she came to the one who was, to her, the source of wisdom. Rich though he was, he graciously received her offering, and so abundantly supplied her need that she cried out, "The half was not told me!" So, when we bring our gifts to a greater than Solomon, although he does not need them, they are graciously received, and the soul cry for help and food abundantly supplied. Give him the gold of love and the spices of service and the precious stones of earthly good and blessed and continuous communion will be assured (v. 2).

The responsive king (v. 3). "And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty" (v. 13). What was the million dollars the queen gave to Solomon compared to his royal bounty to her? What is the gift of our hearts to Christ compared to his rich munificence to us? O soul! bring your gift, small and insignificant though it may seem, bring it and receive what your Solomon delights to give, eternal life, pardon, peace, love and joy. Plutarch says that Cimon, an Athenian general and statesman, laid out all the spoils of war and his personal fortune for the benefit of his fellow citizens. He had the fences removed from his gardens and orchards, that the poor might have free access to them.

The men of this generation (Luke 11:32). Increased light means increased responsibility. Light is the ground of condemnation. The queen of the South set out to find the far-famed Solomon to prove the truth of the reports. She came expecting to find, and succeeded. It exceeded all her wildest dreams. Yet the fame of the power and glory of Christ is in our ears and we heed it not. The happiness of his servants is well known to us and we are indifferent. His table is spread before our eyes, yet we turn away in disdain. The ascent to the house of the Lord is in plain view, but we stand aloof. As Bunyan said, "A step to honor, a step to riches, a step to worldly glory, these are everywhere; but what are these to the steps by which men do ascend to the house of the Lord? The world believes not this; they think it is going downward to go up to the house of God; but they are in a horrible mistake." The power and the glory of Solomon pale into utter insignificance compared to the power and glory of Christ. It is said on good authority that a deputation of Japanese was sent to England some years ago to study the Christian religion and see if it would be an improvement on their own. On the return of these men they reported that never in Japan had they seen such sin, such open licentiousness, drunkenness, selfishness, unkindness, and lack of sympathy as they had witnessed among the professed Christians of England. If this is true, it is but another instance of how the men of this generation will be condemned by those of more limited opportunity. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—God's grace is better than we can tell.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

The queen of Sheba { Desiring / Seeking / Finding

TRUE WISDOM IS FROM GOD

A beginning. Recall two or three stories about Solomon. One may be that of his being made king while his father was still alive. The one about his vision and his choice of wisdom should not be omitted. Another may be about the building and dedicating of the temple.

The queen of Sheba's desire. Note that although the queen of Sheba lived a long distance from Jerusalem, she had heard of Solomon's wisdom. Tell the story of how he decided the case of the two women who each claimed the same child as her own. The queen had heard of Solomon's great wealth. Tell about Solomon's ships that sailed away on the seas to bring gold and other valuable things. Tell about the trains of camels that traveled long distances carrying freight. There were no railroads, and freight had to be carried on the backs of animals. In that country, even now, things are carried in that way. The report of Solomon's greatness may have been carried by these caravans. The queen desired to know about Solomon's wisdom and to see his greatness.

Seeking. When persons desire something very much, they try to get it. Have a picture of one or more camels to show the children and tell them about the long train of camels and drivers and other servants that went from Sheba to Jerusalem. It must have taken the caravan ten weeks to make the journey and as long to go back again. The queen was in earnest to learn about Solomon's wisdom. Tell about the wise men who came from the East to find Jesus. They followed the star that the Lord gave to guide them, and found him. It is better for us to seek Jesus than it was for the queen to seek the wisdom of Solomon.

Finding. It was a long and tiresome journey for the queen of Sheba to take, but she came at length to Jerusalem. She did not quite believe that Solomon was so wise and great as the reports said he was, but when she found him and talked with him, and saw his palace and other things he had, she said that the report did not half tell his wisdom and greatness. She had a number of hard questions and he answered every one of them. Let the class tell what is the very best object for us all to desire, seek and find.

Wisdom in Christ. Tell the class what James says about asking for wisdom. God gives true wisdom to all who earnestly ask for it. Inquire what the queen of Sheba found. We do not know that she found the Lord, but we may hope she did. The truest wisdom in the world is to know Jesus. If we become acquainted with him, he becomes our Savior and will be with us as long as we desire him and keep close to him. He will show us how to live and the way to heaven. He will make us wise to help the needy about us.

LESSON VI

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Aug. 2.—The kingdom torn asunder.—1 Kings 12:6-16. Tu.—Jeroboam made king of Israel.—1 Kings 12:17-24. Wed.—The division prophesied.—1 Kings 11:6-13. Th.—The division symbolized.—1 Kings 11:29-40. Fr.—A divided kingdom.—Luke 11:14-23. Sat.—A divided life.—Rom. 7:7-25. Su.—Jesus' prayer for union.—John 17:11-26.

The Kingdom Torn Asunder.—1 Kings 12: 1-24. Print 12: 6-16.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verse, 16)

SUPT.—6 And king Re-ho-bo'am consulted with the old men, that stood before Sol'o-mon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

School.—7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:

9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

12 So Jer-o-bo'am and all the people came to Re-ho-bo'am the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;

14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by A-hi'jah the Shi'lo-nite unto Jer-o-bo'am the son of Ne'bat.

16 So when all Is'ra-el saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in Da'vid? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jes'se: to your tents, O Is'ra-el: now see to thine own house, Da'vid. So Is'ra-el departed unto their tents.

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6 And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people? 7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. 8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, and took counsel with the young men that were grown up with him, that stood before him. 9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye, that we may return answer to this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke that thy father did put upon us lighter? 10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou say unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou speak unto them, My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. 11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come to me again the third day. 13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, 14 and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. 15 So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of Jehovah, that he might establish his word, which Jehovah spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 And when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Prov. 16: 18.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**Pride often closes the ears to wise counsel.**

TOPIC.—**The result of sin.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Israel's plea. II. Rehoboam taking counsel. III. Rehoboam's answer. IV. The revolt.**

TIME.—**B. C. 975.**

PLACE.—**Shechem, about thirty-five miles north of Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—Solomon's income was enormous, estimated at from ten to twenty million dollars annually. He had navies on many seas, carrying on commerce with points as remote, probably, as the east coast of Africa and the southern part of India. The nation arose to a high point of prosperity. Solomon departed from the Lord in the latter part of his reign. He did not practise the excellent teachings which he gave the world in the Book of Proverbs. He took many wives, and some of them were from heathen nations. He built temples for the strange gods which his wives worshiped. His reign, which began most auspiciously, ended in gloom. In his prayer at the dedication of the temple he prayed that his descendants might serve the Lord and that the kingdom might be preserved to them; but he himself fell into sin, and as a result the kingdom was later rent in two. This union of the twelve tribes which had continued practically intact for seventy-three years was to be destroyed. The old line of cleavage between Judah and the other tribes was apparently forgotten, but when an occasion for a division presented itself, it became manifest. The one nation became two, each claiming

to be God's people, yet both departed in a greater or less degree from the ways of the Lord.

COMMENTARY.—I. Israel's plea (vs. 1-5). Rehoboam was the only son of Solomon, as far as we can ascertain from the records, and at his father's death proceeded to take the throne. In order to do this he must have the consent or approval of the people. Solomon had exacted large service from the people in the great building operations he had carried forward, and some of the tribes had become disaffected toward his administration. Rehoboam knew that there might be difficulty in bringing them to his support, and he went to Shechem to secure the allegiance of the northern tribes, as this place was central for them. It was between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim (Deut. 27:11-13; Josh. 8:33-35), and was historic because of the relation of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and Joshua to it. The people presented to Rehoboam the plea that he make their burdens lighter than those imposed upon them by Solomon. If he would be considerate and just, they would accept him as king and serve him. They had as a counselor Jeroboam, who had been Solomon's servant, and whom the prophet Ahijah had approached with the message that he was to become king over ten of the tribes of Israel (1 Kings 11:26-40). Rehoboam desired three days to consider the people's request before giving an answer. This delay indicated that he was not altogether willing to accede to their wishes.

II. Rehoboam taking counsel (vs. 6-11). **6. consulted with the old men**—It was proper for an inexperienced man, who was entering upon a great work, to consult with those of mature years and judgment, yet Rehoboam could not have done better than to have granted the people's request at once. The next best course was to consult with the old men who had been his father's advisers. **7. if thou wilt be a servant**—The duty of a king is to have regard for the desires and needs of his subjects. He should serve them by doing for them what would make them better and happier. The haughty Rehoboam could scarcely bear the thought of sacrificing his own selfish purposes for the welfare of his people. **speak good words**—Words that would show that he had affection for them and desired their highest welfare. **thy servants for ever**—A little effort on the king's part, with what to him might seem like humiliation, would have brought the opposing factions together and secured to him a stable and united kingdom.

8. forsook the counsel of the old men—Rehoboam was seeking after the kind of advice he desired, and when he did not receive it from the old men, he went elsewhere in search for it. He could not consent to yield to the demands of his subjects. He had no idea of being their servant. **young men**—These were his companions in the royal court, and had the same haughty spirit that possessed him. They had little or no sympathy with the common people. They thought only of power, and the wealth and authority which they believed necessarily went with royalty. **9. what counsel give ye**—Rehoboam expected an answer from them different from the advice he had received from the old men. The young men knew him well enough to understand what course he desired to take, and, without considering what might be the result of that course, advised him to take it. **make the yoke....lighter**—If Solomon had retained in his later life the humility and devotion that characterized his earlier years, there would have been no occasion for the people to make this request. His pride and ambition led him to impose grievous burdens on his people. **10. my little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins**—The young men advised Rehoboam against yielding to the people's desire for relief. The burdens imposed by Solomon would be to those which Rehoboam would impose as the thickness of the little finger is to the thickness of the loins. These advisers flattered him and encouraged him in his vanity. **11. a heavy yoke**—A yoke implies submission and service. The people did not object to either, but there was a limit to the burdens they could carry. **whips....scorpions**—The people were to be the king's abject servants, and were to be treated as slaves. The whip was the instrument used by the slave-driver upon the slaves. The scorpion was a whip in which there were pieces of metal twisted into the lash.

III. Rehoboam's answer (vs. 12-15). **12. Jeroboam**—He was the son of Nebat, of the tribe of Ephraim, and a man of great ability. He was present at Shechem as the natural leader of the ten tribes. **13. answered the people roughly**—Added to the harsh words of his answer was the unkind manner which he employed. Rehoboam displayed neither piety, wisdom nor good taste. **14. counsel of the young men**—He heeded not the wise words of age and experience, nor did he ask counsel of God. His mind was filled with the thought of his own importance and of kingly power. **15. hearkened not**—He did not heed the reasonable request of his people. He missed his opportunity. A large and wealthy domain was his by inheritance, and a prosperous reign was before him if he would show himself generous and wise. **the cause was from the Lord**—The failure of Solomon to obey the Lord had prepared the way for the punishment of the nation, and God permitted the evil dispositions of men to accomplish his designs. **his saying**—The prophecy is given in 1 Kings 11:29-39.

IV. The revolt (vs. 16-24). **16. Israel saw**—When Rehoboam's answer came, the people saw that there was no relief to be hoped for from his administration. Their condition would be worse than under Solomon's rule, and they were ready to decide to cast in their lot with Jeroboam. Rehoboam's course was marked by selfishness, greed and folly. Thirsting for imperial power, he lost at least two thirds of what he might have had. **what portion....in David**—Since no help came from Rehoboam, they felt themselves under no obligation to him. David is mentioned as indicating the royal family. This was a signal for revolt. **to your tents**—This was a call to war. **17-24.** The ten tribes made Jeroboam king over them and the disruption of the kingdom was complete. Rehoboam returned to Jerusalem and ruled as king of Judah and Benjamin. He commenced to prepare for war to bring back the ten tribes, but the Lord sent his prophet Shemaiah to forbid him.

QUESTIONS.—What was the length of Solomon's reign? Who was Rehoboam? What request did the people make of him? What burdens had Solomon laid upon the people? To whom did Rehoboam go for counsel? What two kinds of counsel did he receive? Tell which was better, giving reasons. What wrongs did Rehoboam commit? What tribes remained faithful to Rehoboam? Who reigned over the others?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The length of Solomon's reign. 2. His vast income. 3. His great building operations. 4. His foreign wives. 5. Temples for idolatrous worship. 6. The contrast between his prayer at the dedication of the temple and his conduct in the latter part of his life. 7. Ahijah's prophecy regarding Jeroboam. 8. Connection between Solomon's course and the division of the kingdom.

II. THEME.—Following unwise counsel.

III. REHOBOAM'S OPPORTUNITY.—1. Rehoboam was the only son of Solomon. 2. The greatness of the kingdom left by Solomon. 3. Solomon's exaction of service of his subjects. 4. Rehoboam's right to the throne. 5. The conditions upon which he would have been freely accepted as king. 6. He could have been a benefactor of his people, honored, powerful and a servant of God.

IV. SEEKING COUNSEL.—1. The occasion for his seeking counsel. 2. It is noticeable that he did not seek counsel from God. 3. The kind of counsel he desired. 4. Reason for his appealing to the old men for counsel. 5. The nature of the advice given by his father's counselors. 6. The advice given by the young men. 7. The two compared.

V. FOLLY AND DISASTER.—1. Rehoboam had lack of proper training. (1) His father became worldly. (2) His mother was a heathen. 2. He lacked capacity. 3. He was haughty and self-willed. 4. He sustained the loss of a great part of the kingdom. 5. The cost of having one's own way. 6. God permitted Jeroboam to become king over the revolting ten tribes.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**The result of sin.**

I. Israel's king incapacitated.
II. National disunion.

I. Israel's king incapacitated. In this lesson we see Rehoboam, a young prince, heir to one of the greatest empires of antiquity, with all the advantages which the greatness of his father could give him, sacrificing a position, which has had few parallels, for the lack of a few conciliatory words. Though possessed of natural advantages he had not sufficient wisdom to weigh the value of advice when it was given. Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, began his reign with wrong standards. He assumed that the throne was his by right of succession and ignored the ratification of the people. A variety of circumstances prepared the way for a national crisis. First of all was Solomon's turning away from the Lord in permitting idolatry within his household, and in the oppression which he brought upon the people by his life of luxury. God had expressly declared that he would order future events on the king's obedience or disobedience to the divine law. It was because of Solomon's foreign wives and the idolatries which, with his sanction, they practised, that his empire was to be torn from his son, the child of an unregenerate Ammonitess. Rehoboam could hardly have been ignorant of the conditions which God had placed upon his father, but to the son of an idolater the words of Jehovah had little depth of meaning. By his hesitation at such a time and under such circumstances to listen to the grievances of the people, they saw that he was a tyrant. The people made no dispute about Rehoboam's accession to the throne. They had suffered real hardships and carried heavy burdens during Solomon's reign. They asked for relief from excesses of taxation. There was as yet no determination to rebel. The issue rested with the prospective king. It was to bear the stamp of his mind as well as theirs. The people assembled to honor Rehoboam. Their reservation was not unreasonable. A more foolish step than that which Rehoboam took could scarcely be imagined.

II. National disunion. Idolatry had undermined the deepest foundation of the nation's unity and loyalty to Jehovah. It was to represent God, to fulfil his purpose and to preserve his truth that the kingdom of Israel existed. It had seemed to be one of the chief purposes of God to make Israel a great nation, yet the chosen instrument, essential to the carrying out of God's purpose in giving a revelation and establishing his kingdom in the world, was threatened with destruction. Solomon's tyranny, Rehoboam's folly, the indifference of the people to the unity of the nation, worked out the catastrophe which was a political effect produced by political causes, and at the same time it was a divine judgment. The divine resolve to shatter the kingdom was due to the thwarting of the divine purpose in establishing it. God varies his methods, but leaves his purposes unchanged. Rehoboam's act precipitated God's wrath and effected his purposes. Evil as the events were, God worked out through them his own allwise purpose. The weak Rehoboam and the ambitious Jeroboam were alike his agents. Israel's spiritual hold on Jehovah had relaxed. There was no conscious dependence upon him. Rehoboam's lost opportunity never came to him again. He was forbidden to recover by force what he had sacrificed by folly. He suffered the shame of rejection and desertion. He was defeated in his assertion of authority. He was forced to escape for his own life. The crisis proved him to be lacking in the qualifications of a king. He was even more than usually deficient in common prudence and in capacity for government. Under the leadership of Jeroboam, the rival claimant for the throne, and who promised the desired reforms, the ten tribes revolted. When the word of God came through Shemaiah, forbidding war, Rehoboam was powerless. It was a part of the divine plan that Jeroboam should take possession of the ten tribes. He had been so instructed, but he departed from God and failed in carrying out the divine plan. As a consequence in the two kingdoms, failure followed upon disobedience to the divine leadership. Neither of the rival kings was true to his convictions of right. Neither was upheld by the Lord.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Opportunity. "And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever" (v. 7).

"To every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth, with Falsehood, for the good or evil side.
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Puts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes on forever, 'twixt that darkness and that light."

For three days Opportunity tarried for Rehoboam. For three days she stood at the parting of the ways, pointing along the path of wisdom as outlined by the council of the wise men. But he deliberately turned into the path of folly. He overlooked a universal law. Consequences, resulting from choices made, are inevitable. Effects follow causes. Louis the Fourteenth made his autocratic boast, "I am the state," and prepared the way for the French Revolution. Rehoboam haughtily announced, "I will add to your yoke" (v. 14), and paved the way for a divided kingdom and the "ten lost tribes." The opportunity to illustrate the great law of Christian service, "Whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all," was lost. He deliberately chose to sow to the wind and reaped the whirlwind. Choice for you is fraught with as grave responsibility as for Rehoboam. Choose darkness rather than light; sow to the flesh rather than to the Spirit, and you will lose your kingdom of love and light and power.

The downfall of pride. "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Golden Text). Some one has said that Solomon had a thousand wives, but only one son, and he was a fool. Real kingship is personal. The only religious leadership that men will recognize and follow is the leadership of service. The man, king or priest, who saves and insists upon his authority will lose it. Rehoboam followed the counsel of the young men and said, "The old fogies have carried on the government long enough. I will show you what I can do." The wreck of his kingdom was the measure of his folly. A German historian, describing Napoleon's entry into Dusseldorf in 1810, says, "On his face was written, 'Thou shalt adore no other gods but me.'" An old fable illustrates the folly and ruin of pride as follows: "Will you allow me, sir?" said the ivy to a gnarled old oak; "I won't intrude without your permission." The oak looked down at his feet, which the ivy was covering, and made no answer. "What a ragged old fellow you are!" said the ivy, when she had reached half-way up the massive trunk. "I have crossed knots and knobs innumerable in you: you may thank me for looking so handsome." "Do you think we will sell for much?" said the ivy as she grew to the topmost branches; "I see they have been marking us. You are aware that you owe all your beauty to me." The oak was felled and the ivy lay withered and trailing on the ground. "Alas," she cried, "how could I so forget myself? I knew I was but an ivy when I was at the bottom of the tree, but when I got to the top I thought I was an oak."

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—We should be humble and helpful to others.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

REHOBOAM'S { GREED / ADVISERS / LOSS

The kingdom of Israel. Have a map of the kingdom over which Solomon ruled and hang it on the wall or draw an outline of the kingdom on the board. Tell the story of Solomon's greatness as a king, showing that he had many ships on the seas going long distances to bring gold and other valuable things. Recall his choice of wisdom and his building of the house of the Lord. Note that he was drawn away from the God of Israel by his association with the heathen. He failed to obey the Lord and the close of his life was dark and unsatisfactory. He would have saved himself and his nation much trouble if he had been true to God and had continued humble as he was in the beginning of his reign.

Rehoboam's greed. Tell how kings in ancient times compelled their subjects to work for them for nothing. They were engaged in building great structures. Solomon had required his people to render much service of this kind and they grew tired of it. Rehoboam seems like a man who in childhood had been allowed to have his own way. He did not think about others. He was his father's only son and naturally he would become king upon his father's death. On the map place a mark to represent Shechem, where the people assembled from all over the country to meet Rehoboam and make him king. Repeat the plea the people made to have their burdens lightened. If he had done right and made it easier for his people, he might have been a great king, but he wished to show them that he was master. It is not always best for children or grown people to have their own way. Note the evil of selfishness.

Rehoboam's advisers. It is an honorable thing for young persons to ask advice of those who are older and wiser than they. Tell the story of Rehoboam's going to the old men and then to the young for advice. The old men would not give him the advice he wished and he went to his young companions. Note how unwise it was for them to tell Rehoboam to make the burdens of the people heavier than they had been before. He listened to them, for they gave him the kind of advice he wished. He cared only for himself and not for the people.

Rehoboam's loss. He tried unjustly to get more power and lost a large part of what he had. A dog had a nice bone in his mouth and saw his image in the water and saw what seemed to be another dog with a bone. He snapped to get another bone and lost the one he had. Rehoboam tried to show too much authority. Draw a line on the map showing the boundary between Jeroboam's kingdom and what was left to him. His greed and pride caused him to lose much. Call attention to the reputation of Rehoboam as it comes down to us in history. Compare it with that of Joseph or Elijah or Daniel, who were humble and godly men.

LESSON VII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Aug. 9.—Jeroboam leads Israel into sin.—1 Kings 12: 25-33. Tu.—The golden calf.—Exod. 32: 1-6. Wed.—Jeroboam's altar.—1 Kings 13: 1-10. Th.—Wages of sin.—Rom. 6: 12-23. Fr.—The altar at Athens.—Acts 17: 22-34. Sat.—Causing to stumble.—Matt. 18: 1-14. Su.—Israel's judgment.—Hosea 8.

Jeroboam Leads Israel into Sin.—1 Kings 12: 25-33.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 28, 29)

SUPT.—25 Then Jer-o-bo'am built She'chem in mount E'phra-im, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Pen'u-el.

School.—26 And Jer-o-bo'am said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of Da'vid:

27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Je-ru'sa-lem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Re-ho-bo'am king of Ju'dah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Re-ho-bo'am king of Ju'dah.

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Je-ru'sa-lem: behold thy gods, O Is'ra-el, which brought thee up out of the land of E'gypt.

29 And he set the one in Beth'-el, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.

31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Le'vi.

32 And Jer-o-bo'am ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Ju'dah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth'-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth'-el the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth'-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Is'ra-el: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

*AMERICAN REVISION

25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill-country of Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and he went out from thence, and built Penuel. 26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now will the kingdom return to the house of David: 27 if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, then will the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me, and return to Rehoboam king of Judah. 28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold; and he said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 29 And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin; for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. 31 And he made houses of high places, and made priests from among all the people, that were not of the sons of Levi. 32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he went up unto the altar; so did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places that he had made. 33 And he went up unto the altar which he had made in Beth-el on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart: and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and went up unto the altar, to burn incense.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. Exod. 20: 4, 5.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**True religion goes out when worldly ambition comes in.**

TOPIC.—**Jeroboam's policy.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Jeroboam's fear. II. Idolatry introduced. III. God's laws broken.**

TIME.—**B. C. 975.**

PLACES.—**Shechem; Bethel; Dan.**

INTRODUCTION.—God was not pleased with the disruption of the kingdom, only that it was the best thing that could be done under existing conditions. Solomon's course in pressing into service great numbers of his subjects in his vast building operations had laid the foundation for disaffection, and Rehoboam's reckless policy aggravated that disaffection until it resulted in the revolt of the ten tribes to Jeroboam. Both kings were worldly and selfish. Although during the first three years of his reign Rehoboam gave attention to the strengthening of his kingdom and the people walked in the way of David and Solomon (2 Chron. 11: 17), yet "he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord" (2 Chron. 12: 14). Of Jeroboam it is said twenty-three times that he "made Israel to sin." Rehoboam's kingdom became strengthened by the flocking to him of many priests and Levites from the ten tribes; for Jeroboam's policy was to cast them out and take others for the priests of the religion he established. There were many others who desired to seek the true God and they went to Jerusalem to sacrifice to him. Rehoboam's evil course was punished by the invasion of his kingdom by Shishak, king of Egypt, who took from the temple the shields of gold that Solomon had made.

COMMENTARY.—I. JEROBOAM'S FEAR (vs. 25-27). **25. built Shechem**—Jeroboam selected Shechem as the capital of his kingdom. He erected buildings necessary for that purpose and fortified the city. The location was favorable, being central, and the place had many historic events clustering about it. Abraham pitched his tent there upon entering Canaan for the first time. There Jacob bought a portion of land which he gave to Joseph. Shechem was situated between Gerizim and Ebal from which blessings and curses, respectively, were pronounced upon Israel. It was one of the six cities of refuge. There Joshua gathered the people shortly before his death and delivered to them his parting words. At Shechem all Israel assembled to receive Rehoboam as king, but upon his failure to yield to reasonable demands ten tribes went over to Jeroboam. A few years later the king removed his capital to Tirzah, a place a little north of Shechem. **mount Ephraim**—In the hill-country, or upon the mountainous ridge which

extends for fifty miles north and south through the central part of Palestine. Jeroboam belonged to the tribe of Ephraim. **went out from thence**—With Shechem as a fortified center he built other fortifications at important points to keep out his enemies. **built Penuel**—This is the Peniel of Genesis 32:24-32 and means "face of God." It was here that Jacob wrestled all night with the angel of God, and gained the victory, his name being changed from Jacob to Israel. Penuel was situated on the river Jabbok, about twenty miles east of where it flows into the Jordan. It was fortified to protect the kingdom from Assyrian invasion, since Penuel was on the great caravan road to the East.

26. Jeroboam said in his heart—He said one thing in his heart and quite another to his people. It is no uncommon thing for one to say in his heart what he would not for the world say to others. We are judged by men largely by what we say with our lips, but God judges us by what we say in our hearts. **kingdom return**—The king realized that the people who had so eagerly pledged allegiance to him were liable to forsake him and return to the kingdom from which they revolted, should some provocation arise. He knew the temper of his people, and as a sagacious ruler he foresaw what might occur. **27. if this people....sacrifice....at Jerusalem**—Jeroboam recognized the fact that the tribes that had seceded and come over to him had not in so doing forsaken the God and the religion of their fathers. They would continue to worship the God of Israel, and Jerusalem was the true center of that worship. He was wise enough not to attempt to establish at once a new religion although he knew that the repeated visits of his people to Jerusalem for worship as the law required (Deut. 16:16) would be likely to win them back to the parent kingdom. The religious instinct in man is deep-seated and is easily able to overcome even national and patriotic considerations. **their lord....Rehoboam**—This was a confession that Rehoboam was their lawful sovereign. Jeroboam felt that his hold upon the people was, at best, insecure. **shall kill me**—Jeroboam was influenced in his course by fear for his personal safety as well as by his ambition. In comparing the motives which actuated the two kings but little difference is found. Both seem to have been moved by selfish impulses. The true welfare of their respective peoples was disregarded.

II. IDOLATRY INTRODUCED (vs. 28-30). **28. took counsel**—He surely did not take counsel of God. In such an important matter he wished others to share the responsibility, and consulted those who were his supporters in the kingdom. It is a fatal mistake to leave God out of one's counsels. **made two calves of gold**—It is worthy of note that the images made by Jeroboam were like that made by Aaron in the wilderness (Exod. 32:4). Both men were familiar with the image of the ox from their acquaintance with the religion of Egypt, and Jeroboam may have been influenced by that knowledge in making the golden calves. It is more probable that the golden calves were suggested by the oxen in the temple upon which rested the molten sea. **it is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem**—Jeroboam desired to make the people feel that he was acting in their interest, and wished to make religion convenient. If this had been his real motive, his sin would have been great, for whoever makes his religion a matter of convenience loses sight of the nature of true religion. The real object, however, of setting up the golden calves was to keep his people from going to Jerusalem, fearing that in associating with the people of Judah they might be inclined to turn from him and go over to Rehoboam. **behold thy gods**—Jeroboam was far from being a deeply religious man, and he doubtless believed that the people could worship the true God, while considering the golden calf as a mere symbol of the divine presence. We observe that he used the exact words spoken by Aaron more than five hundred years before (Exod. 32:4).

29. in Beth-el....Dan—Bethel means "house of God." It was a sacred place. Abraham had built an altar there (Gen. 12:8), there Jacob saw his vision and gave the place its name (Gen. 28:11-19), the ark of God was at one time stationed at Bethel (Judg. 20:18, R. V.) and there Samuel judged Israel (1 Sam. 7:16). The city was situated about fifteen miles north of Jerusalem, and was in the southern part of Jeroboam's kingdom. Dan lay in the extreme northern part, thus giving all the people of the northern kingdom easy access to one or the other of these shrines. Dan had also a history as a religious center. An idolatrous graven image had been set up and was presided over by descendants of Moses (Judg. 18:27-30). **30. became a sin**—Whatever may have been the design of Jeroboam, the outcome was such as might reasonably have been expected. The worship at these shrines became idolatrous, and both the first and the second commandments were broken. **even unto Dan**—It is probable that, since Bethel was so well known and easy of access, it was not considered necessary to mention that place, and it is stated definitely that the people went to Dan, which was far away.

III. GOD'S LAWS BROKEN (vs. 31-33). **31. house of high places**—It was customary to erect idolatrous shrines upon the tops of hills. Jeroboam built a house of worship at Bethel and one at Dan, while God had declared that the temple at Jerusalem was the true place of worship. **lowest of the people**—"Among all the people."—*R. V.* Instead of employing the Levites as priests according to God's arrangement, Jeroboam took any that pleased him for the purpose. The Levites would not wish to officiate at idolatrous altars and went in large numbers to Rehoboam's kingdom. **32. feast in the eighth month**—The king wished to provide a feast for his people to correspond to the feast of Tabernacles, but in order to make it unlike that feast he appointed it in the eighth month instead of the seventh. **he offered upon the altar**—Either personally or through the priests of his own appointing he sacrificed to the golden calves of his own making. **33. devised of his own heart**—The king left God out of his counsels. He "said in his heart" (v. 26), and "devised of his own heart" an order of worship which was not pleasing to the Lord.

QUESTIONS.—What cities did Jeroboam build, and why? What did the king say in his heart? What is meant by the house of David? At what cities did Jeroboam establish places of worship? What reason did he give for setting up the golden calves in those places? What was the real reason for appointing those two places of worship? Whom did he make priests? What feast did he appoint, and how did it differ from the feast in Judah? What commandments did Jeroboam violate? What warning was sent to him?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. Rehoboam's early training. 2. His weakness in not following the counsel of older men. 3. Jeroboam's ability. 4. Points of resemblance between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. 5. Points of difference. 6. God's mercy toward his people. 7. Lessons to be learned from the disruption of the kingdom.

II. Theme.—Turning away from the Lord.

III. Jeroboam's fear.—1. The subjects of the two kingdoms were one in race and religion. 2. The tendency toward union. 3. The fear that after a short time his subjects would turn toward Judah. 4. Measures to strengthen his kingdom. 5. Recognition of the religious character of his people. 6. Jeroboam's ingenuity in satisfying the religious instinct of his people, and at the same time turning them away from association with the subjects of the other kingdom. 7. His policy resulted in the degradation of the nation. 8. Jeroboam's title.

IV. A rival religion.—1. Jehovah was the God of Israel. 2. A broad distinction between true religion and secular interests. 3. The disaster of making religion a matter of convenience. 4. The images made by Jeroboam as symbols of Jehovah became idols.

V. God's laws broken.—1. Jeroboam turned from Jehovah to idols. 2. Jerusalem was the place appointed for worship, but Jeroboam made Bethel and Dan religious centers. 3. He appointed those as priests who were not of the tribe of Levi. 4. He changed the time of the feast of Tabernacles. 5. Jeroboam offered incense, thus acting as a priest. 6. Sin is added to sin.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Jeroboam's policy.**

I. Caused a breach in national unity.
II. Led to a violation of divine law.

I. Caused a breach in national unity. Jeroboam's policy perpetuated and multiplied in Israel the evils of which the rending of the kingdom had at first been the penalty. The ordained and fully deserved penalty of Solomon's transgression was the placement of another than his son upon the throne of a divided kingdom. Seated at last on his throne, Jeroboam was face to face with the opportunity of his life. It was a decisive hour in the young ruler's career. His future and the fate of a kingdom hung in the balance. With his great opportunity before him Jeroboam failed. Lawless ambition became his ruin. His attempt to sever the sacred bond that held the people of the whole nation in one common allegiance to the temple and God, was wholly evil. He reasoned that it was necessary to isolate the nation religiously as well as governmentally. Having adopted his policy, Jeroboam had to devise suitable means for carrying out the same. In his procedure he ignored the universal law of consequences, of cause and effect. Four important measures received his immediate attention, a capital, a plan of worship, a festival and a priesthood. Having fortified some of the chief cities of his realm, Jeroboam set to work to create public sentiment favorable to his scheme, which led to a division in the Jewish church. His policy revealed his utter distrust of God. He took advantage of the jealousy of the tribes. He hid his zeal for his own safety under the plea of seeking the comfort and convenience of the people. He acted craftily upon the religious sentiments of the people, to serve his own ambitious designs. He took advantage of the sacred associations of Bethel and Dan. In every step Jeroboam took he was sealing his own doom and that of his people.

II. Led to a violation of divine law. God had ordained that there should be one sanctuary for the whole nation. Jeroboam knew that and also that the division of the kingdom was to make no difference as to the oneness or the position of the sanctuary. He was repeatedly reminded that Jerusalem was the one place of incense and sacrifice. He ignored the living God as a factor in consolidating his kingdom. Recognizing as he did the religious tendencies of his people, he foresaw that the national assemblies for worship in the temple at Jerusalem would eventually reunite the twelve tribes under one king. To suit the exigencies of the case, God's ordinances were overturned, other places of worship were set up, the commandment against image worship was broken, the national connection with the religion which God had ordained was broken off. Herein was his fatal mistake. True policy would have been to have left matters of religion unchanged. Jeroboam had been called to the throne for political purposes. He made use of the church to serve his political ambitions. He did not openly reject Jehovah, but he corrupted his worship. It was probably his boast that he with the people worshiped the one true God in a more rational and primitive way. Devices to lighten the stress of duty and to give a liberal interpretation to moral obligations became popular. The introduction of old errors indulged their idolatrous propensities. A servile priesthood aided in accomplishing the enslavement of the people. The one center of unity gave place to three centers of division. The one ritual of divine obligation was travestied by rites and ceremonies of human appointment. The one feast of Tabernacles, appointed of God, was supplanted by a feast devised by man. That feast, the most joyous of the year, had once been the greatest manifestation of religious unity which Israel afforded. Jeroboam made a rival feast. The worship of the people was a matter of greatest concern in the establishment of his kingdom. The ten tribes must be brought to renounce Jerusalem as the only place of acceptable worship. They must be persuaded to accept a new order of priests if the division of the kingdom continued. Under his pretense to reestablish the old worship Jeroboam was able to conciliate those who were proud of past history. His policy was shrewd and sinful. He used his authority for the furtherance of ungodliness. He placed politics before religion. He chose convenience instead of duty.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The policy man (vs. 27, 28). The end justifies the means, is Satan's dictum for all moral action. The evil of placing policy before principle is as old as sin. To announce that any proposed course is not good policy, or that it is good policy, is sufficient for many people. If right goes with policy, all is well; if right parts company with policy, right pleads in vain. Policy said to Moses, "Choose the throne of Egypt." Right said, "Choose affliction with the people of God." Policy said to Daniel, "Obey the king and pray in thy heart." Right said, "Open thy windows as aforetime." Policy said to Christ, "Come down from the cross." Right said, "Suffer to the end." Policy said to Jeroboam, "Build altars, make idols and keep the people at home." Right said, "Let the people go to worship at Jerusalem and let the kingdom be restored, but let there be no violation of God's law." Policy is still speaking, saying to the church, "Be lenient, be modern, be like the world if you would have influence with it." Right says, "Obey God, be true to principle at whatever cost in order to have the blessing of the Lord." Which voice are you following? You may say that you are independent in your choices; but yours is a remarkable case if you are influenced by no one.

The sinning man (v. 30). Over twenty times in the books of the Kings we find the reference to Jeroboam as being the man who made Israel to sin. Long ago an English trader took a few rabbits to Australia and since then they have become a scourge to the country. A farmer brought some thistle seed into this country and since then the memory of his deed is an execration. Jeroboam planted the seedlings of sin which produced a harvest of woe. A man died, supposed to have been wealthy. A neighbor asked, "Did he leave much?" "He left all he had," was the reply. Every man, rich or poor, leaves a posthumous influence to bless or curse the world. To sin and to make others to sin, is to start in motion streams of influence, which, in their possibilities for cumulative evil, are fearful to contemplate. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Rom. 14:7).

The idolatrous man (Golden Text). The conception of the God who is worshiped reproduces itself in the characters of the worshipers; if he is vile, his worshipers will be vile; if he is pure, they will be pure. Some one has said, "Idolatry does not begin as idolatry. There is a movement downward. Every tendency toward materialism is a backward tendency in religion." The golden calves still exist in covetousness, which is idolatry (Eph. 5:5). God's message is still to men, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21). According to Jewish tradition, Terah was a maker and seller of idols. Being obliged to leave home one day, he left his son, Abraham, to attend to the business. An old man came in, and, looking around, took a fancy to a certain idol, and asked the price. In reply, Abraham said, "Aged man, may I be permitted to ask thine age?" "Threescore years," replied the idolater. Whereupon Abraham exclaimed, "Threescore years! and thou wouldest worship a thing that has been fashioned by the hands of my father's slaves within the last four and twenty hours. Strange that a man of sixty should be willing to bow his gray head to a creature of a day." At these words the man bowed his head in shame and went away. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—We should worship the Lord only.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Jeroboam { Idolatrous / Disobedient / Made Israel sin

ONE SIN LEADS TO ANOTHER

A beginning. It is necessary to cover the simple story of the last lesson in a short review. Call out by questioning the persons, places and the acts performed. Call attention to the good and warn against the evil. In connection with the review tell briefly the story of Rehoboam's reign. Study it carefully so that you may impress the truths that the children are capable of receiving. Tell of his efforts to follow the good ways of his grandfather David. Then tell how he became careless and failed to obey God, and of the prophet who was sent to warn him against his evil ways. Tell how he listened and humbled himself, and yet he had sinned so deeply that God let the king of Egypt take away great treasure from him.

Idolatry in Israel. In a few words, or by questioning, make plain to the class what the Ten Commandments are and their source. Repeat the first commandment and have the class repeat it with you. Explain it and show how Jeroboam broke it. Tell what the second commandment means and apply it to the acts of the king. People in India and China worship idols. It would be helpful if you could have some heathen idol or a picture of one to be shown the children and show them how foolish and wicked it is to bow down to them.

Disobedience. Tell what God had said about the right place for worship, the persons who should be made priests and the feast of Tabernacles which God had appointed, then show what Jeroboam did in disobedience to all that God had said. Be prepared with a simple story to illustrate disobedience to parents or teachers. It will answer the purpose to draw out from some one in the class such a story. It was very wrong for the king to disobey God's law, and it is wrong for children to disobey God.

Making others sin. Show what authority and influence a king has over his subjects. Show that it is not necessary for the child to do wrong because another wants him to, but make it impressive that it is wicked to influence another to sin. No one would want such a title as was given to Jeroboam. It is bad enough for one to sin alone, but it is far worse for one to try to induce others to sin. Many children fall into evil habits because they are led on by others.

One sin leads to another. Trace Jeroboam's course. He got the kingdom that rightfully belonged to Rehoboam. Mention the different sins that he committed as a consequence of that step. A mother got her little boy ready for Sunday-school and told him to go directly there. He secretly put some marbles in his pocket and started. He met a boy who asked him to play and he did so, but lost some in the ditch and stole a few belonging to the other, and on going home told his mother he had been to Sunday-school when he had not. One sin led to another.

LESSON VIII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Aug. 16.—Asa's good reign.—2 Chron. 15: 1-15. Tu.—Asa's zeal and victory.—2 Chron. 14: 1-15. Wed.—Asa's error.—2 Chron. 16: 1-10. Th.—Jehovah our strength. —Isa. 12. Fr.—Trust in God.—Psalms 3, 4. Sat.—Righteousness and peace.—Isa. 54: 11-17. Su.—God's goodness to men.—Isa. 55.

Asa's Good Reign.—2 Chronicles 15: 1-15.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 1, 2)

SUPT.—1 And the Spirit of God came upon Az-a-ri'ah the son of O'ded:

SCHOOL.—2 And he went out to meet A'sa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, A'sa, and all Ju'dah and Ben'ja-min; The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.

3 Now for a long season Is'ra-el hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.

4 But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Is'ra-el, and sought him, he was found of them.

5 And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries.

6 And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity.

7 Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.

8 And when A'sa heard these words, and the prophecy of O'ded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Ju'dah and Ben'ja-min, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount E'phra-im, and renewed the altar of the Lord, that was before the porch of the Lord.

9 And he gathered all Ju'dah and Ben'ja-min, and the strangers with them out of E'phra-im and Ma-nas'seh, and out of Sim'e-on: for they fell to him out of Is'ra-el in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him.

10 So they gathered themselves together at Je-ru'sa-lem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of A'sa.

11 And they offered unto the Lord the same time, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep.

12 And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul;

13 That whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Is'ra-el should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.

14 And they sware unto the Lord with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets.

15 And all Ju'dah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: 2 and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Jehovah is with you, while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. 3 Now for a long season Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law: 4 but when in their distress they turned unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. 5 And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the lands. 6 And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city; for God did vex them with all adversity. 7 But be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack; for your work shall be rewarded.

8 And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominations out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from the hill-country of Ephraim; and he renewed the altar of Jehovah, that was before the porch of Jehovah. 9 And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and them that sojourned with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that Jehovah his God was with him. 10 So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. 11 And they sacrificed unto Jehovah in that day, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. 12 And they entered into the covenant to seek Jehovah, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul; 13 and that whosoever would not seek Jehovah, the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. 14 And they sware unto Jehovah with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets. 15 And all Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and Jehovah gave them rest round about.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **SCHOOL.—Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. James 4: 8.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**One person who is true to God can accomplish great things.**

TOPIC.—**Reformation in Judah.**

OUTLINE.—**I. The message to Asa. II. Asa encouraged. III. A great assembly. IV. A solemn covenant.**

TIME.—**B. C. 940.**

PLACE.—**Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—Jeroboam reigned over the northern kingdom for twenty-two years, and, viewed from a merely worldly standpoint, his reign was successful; but he opened the way for a great national departure from God, and the effects of his course were realized through all the subsequent history of the nation. He was succeeded by his son Nadab, who was slain after reigning two years by Baasha, who wrested the kingdom from him. Jeroboam was of the tribe of Ephraim and Baasha was of the tribe of Issachar. In Israel there were frequent changes from one tribe to another, but in Judah the rulers were continuously of the tribe of Judah. Rehoboam's reign of seventeen years over Judah was partly good and partly bad. His son Abijah, or Abijam, followed him and reigned three years. Of him it is said that "he walked in all the sins of his father," yet with the help of God whom he acknowledged when about to engage in battle, he conquered the hosts of Israel and took from them several of their cities. At his death Asa, his

son, ascended the throne. He was a God-fearing young man of about twenty years and brought about important reforms in the nation, and strengthened the kingdom by building strong defenses.

COMMENTARY.—I. THE MESSAGE TO ASA (vs. 1-7). **1. the Spirit of God**—The Holy Spirit moved the hearts of men in Old Testament times (2 Chron. 20:14; 24:20; 2 Peter 1:21). **Azariah**—We know nothing of this prophet aside from what is here recorded. A prophet is one who brings a message from God. It may declare future events, or, as in this place, it may be a message of instruction or encouragement. **2. to meet Asa**—Asa and his army were returning from their victory over the Ethiopian host under Zerah. Asa had cried unto the Lord in submission and faith, and his triumph was complete. A large amount of spoil came into his hands. **the Lord is with you**—The condition upon which the Lord was with Asa was that Asa took his place on God's side. This message came both as an encouragement and a warning. No one can expect the presence, favor and help of the Lord unless he is obedient to him and earnest and trustful. **if ye seek him**—Compare the words of Jesus in Matt. 7:7. **he will forsake you**—This truth was verified in the history of God's chosen people again and again. Those who in their hearts and by their actions reject God are rejected by him. It is an awful calamity to be forsaken by the Lord. **3. for a long season without the true God**—Various views are held regarding these words. Some think reference is made to spiritual conditions in the kingdom of Israel, while others believe that the state of Judah under Rehoboam and Abijah is intended. It is maintained by others that it is a prophecy of future conditions among the Jews, and still others hold that the words are applicable to the times of the judges. Taken in connection with the fourth verse the sense seems to be that many times they had been without the true God and a proper regard for his worship and law, but whenever they turned to him and sought him they found him. **a teaching priest**—There were always priests but often they were faithless, and through their failure the people were not instructed in the law. **4. in their trouble**—Men and nations are inclined to forget God, but when trouble and distress come they are often led to turn unto him for help.

5. in those times—When God's law was disregarded. **no peace....great vexations**—God has said that there is no peace to the wicked. They may be outwardly prosperous, but within is turmoil and strife. This was the condition of the nation in their rebellion against God. **6. nation was destroyed of nation**—The kingdoms of Judah and Israel waged frequent and destructive wars with each other. **city of city**—In the times of the judges it was not uncommon for one city to be attacked by another. **adversity**—God permitted hostile nations to make inroads into Israel as judgments upon the nation because of their sin. **7. be ye strong therefore**—In view of God's past dealings with his people there was great encouragement for them to be submissive, trustful and firm.

II. ASA ENCOURAGED (v. 8). **8. the prophecy of Oded**—It is evident that either the words, "Azariah the son of," have been omitted or the word, "Oded," has crept into the text from a marginal note, for the prophet here mentioned is the same one whose name is given in the first verse. **took courage**—There were two strong reasons why Asa should be full of courage. He had gained a remarkable victory over the Ethiopians through the help of the Lord, and the prophet had come to him with a most inspiring message. **put away....idols**—His courage moved him to action. He had already made an effort to destroy idolatry (2 Chron. 14:3), but the prophet's message, following his great victory, urged him on to another strong effort to complete the work. **out of the cities**—Asa considered that his responsibility did not end with Judah and Benjamin, but extended to all the territory providentially under his control. His father had taken from Israel the cities Bethel and Jeshanah (2 Chron. 13:19). **mount Ephraim**—The mountainous region of the tribe of Ephraim. **renewed the altar of the Lord**—This was the great brazen altar (2 Chron. 4:1), the altar of burnt-offering, and stood before the porch of the temple.

III. A GREAT ASSEMBLY (vs. 9-11). **9. all Judah and Benjamin**—The tribes which constituted the kingdom of Judah. Asa desired that the reforms he had undertaken should be most thorough and wide-spread, hence his calling an assembly of all the people. **strangers**—Those belonging to the kingdom of Israel who were drawn to Judah by the great reformation there in progress. **in abundance**—A genuine revival of religion always attracts the people. **the Lord his God was with him**—The Lord was with him because he took his position on the side of truth and righteousness, and did his duty in the destruction of idolatry. Idolatry was prevalent in the kingdom of Israel and many of the people there longed for something better, and when they saw that God was with Judah they flocked thither. **10. gathered....in the third month**—The assembly was held at Jerusalem at the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover. **11. they offered unto the Lord**—They who expect help from the Lord make their offering to him.

IV. A SOLEMN COVENANT (vs. 12-15). **12. entered into a covenant**—1. The people realized their need. 2. They made their offering to God. 3. They made solemn vows to the Lord. It is an easy-going, worldly religion that does not take hold upon the consciences of men. **all their heart....all their soul**—The expression used includes the entire being, physical, intellectual and moral. The pledge made to seek the Lord thus could not fail of results. **13. would not seek the Lord**, etc.—Thus no toleration was given to idolatry, so that it must be rooted out; and, that this covenant might be properly binding, they confirmed it with an oath, and God accepted them and their services.—*Clarke.* See Exod. 22:20; Deut. 13:6-15; 17:2-6. **14. with a loud voice**—They believed they were doing the right thing and were not ashamed. They were intensely in earnest. They were exercised in a good cause. **trumpets** — Crooked horns. **cornets** — Straight horns. **15. rejoiced**—The people had done their part and God fulfilled his promise. Joy forms a large part of true religion.

QUESTIONS.—What kings had reigned before Asa in Judah? Who was king in Israel at this time? What prophet came to Asa? What message did he bring? By what two things was Asa encouraged? What great work did Asa undertake? What was the object in calling the assembly of all the nation? Describe the sacrifices that were made. What covenant did the people make? How was their earnestness shown? What were the feelings of the people? What reasons were there for rejoicing?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The history of God's chosen people is along two lines since the disruption of the kingdom. 2. Trace the intervening history of Israel. 3. Trace the intervening history of Judah. 4. The attitude of the two kingdoms toward each other. 5. Asa's first attempts at reform.

II. Theme.—The blessedness of being on God's side.

III. Historical facts.—1. Note the circumstances under which the prophet met the king. Review briefly Asa's great victory. 2. Azariah's message. (1) Personal. (2) Direct. (3) Timely. (4) Effective. 3. Asa at work. (1) Destroying idolatry. (2) Renewing the brazen altar. 4. An appeal to the people. (1) The assembly called. (2) The place of the gathering. (3) The time. (4) The character of the assembly. (5) A sacrificing assembly. 5. The covenant. (1) The parties to the covenant. (2) The twofold character of the covenant. (a) To seek the Lord. (b) To destroy those who would not seek the Lord.

IV. Spiritual truths.—1. Taking sides with God. (1) The way is always open for us to do it. (2) Sufficient light is afforded to us to take our place on God's side. (3) The will is brought into exercise. (4) The distinction between the sinful side and the right side. (5) Evidences that one is on the side of God. (6) The results of being on his side. 2. Seeking God. (1) The promises given elsewhere in scripture. (2) The manner of seeking God. (3) The consequence of not seeking God is death (v. 13).

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Reformation in Judah.**

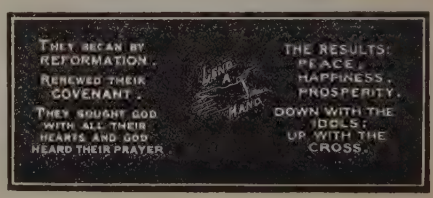
I. Proposed by the prophet.
II. Undertaken by the king.

I. Proposed by the prophet. The prophet Azariah met king Asa and his warriors with words of timely admonition and warning as they were returning from a victorious campaign. The conqueror's welcome was a message from God. Courage in perceiving and doing the right thing was the special demand of the hour. A sacred duty was presented by the prophet, who deemed it as much an obligation as an endowment to be spiritually strong. By illustration he showed that fidelity to God had proved to be the condition of prosperity, while religious apostasy was as surely followed by national disaster. The right thing in Judah at that time was to adhere to Jehovah, to reform the abuses of previous reigns and to exterminate idolatrous rites which had been introduced by earlier kings. The prophet laid emphasis upon the necessity of whole-heartedness in seeking God. Only twenty years had elapsed since the death of Solomon, yet irreligion and vice had corrupted the nation. The moral condition was deplorable when Asa came to the throne. The apostasy of Solomon had inaugurated a retrogression which was aggravated in the reign of successive kings, so that for three generations the abominations of the heathen were increasing. Idolatry was immorality concentrated in its most hideous forms. No religious zeal could have been genuine in a monarch which did not sweep the land clean of idolatry. Asa was called upon to be strong in the face of all that was wrong. He was given the promise of success in his work with the assurance that God would be present, to give energy to all the powers and faculties of body and mind.

II. Undertaken by the king. Encouraged by the words of the prophet, King Asa determined to convene a national assembly and enter into a solemn covenant to carry out the work of reformation. He saw that sin was sapping the foundation of the nation's stability and strength and he set himself to uproot it. Neither reverence for the dead nor fear of the living was suffered to stand in the way of his obedience to God. An independent spirit and a resolute will were combined with his piety. It showed the spirit of the people that they responded at once to the king's call. The need of the time was manifestly met. Asa and his people manifested truest wisdom when they, by a national act, sought the Lord with full purpose of heart. All Judah and Benjamin, with such Israelites as were in sympathy with the new movement, were summoned to Jerusalem to covenant to seek God. Asa began at the right place. He did thorough work up to the limit of his power. Beginning with his own house, he removed the idols which his father had set up. He put down idolatry with unflinching faithfulness. This was followed by a public proclamation of a revived faith before the world. There was a thorough reformation of public and private morals, a transformation of character and reformation of life. The heart of the revival lay in a revival of their covenant with God. The same truths that inspire every true revival were set forth in that ancient revival in Judah, the faithfulness of God and human responsibility, mercy for the penitent and punishment for the rebellious. The moral reformation is suggested by the words, "He took away the Sodomites out of the land." That was the first step toward a religious reformation. Asa's reform made itself felt in diminishing opportunities for sin, in destroying incentives to sin, in removing influences to sin. His confidence was displayed by his repose in God amid peril, by his prayer to God under difficulty, by the consecration of himself and his people to God after their great victory in battle. The moral conditions which surrounded Asa only magnify the grace which made him what he was. Educated by his idolatrous grandmother Maachah, a daughter of the rebellious Absalom, he had to rise to the standard of his ancestor David before he could deal with the sin that surrounded him. He stood in strong contrast to Solomon, the wise king and great monarch who built idol altars for his heathen wives. In so doing Solomon granted to foreign deities and shameful superstitions a footing in the midst of God's people. Asa was the first to stem the tide of sin with which that great ancestor had flooded the land. He was earnest and pious.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The revival needed (vs. 3-6). History repeats itself. Our day is a counterpart of Asa's day. The name of God is but the expression of an ideal. The teaching priest is but the name of a mercenary. Law is but one's own conception of personal duty. Peace of mind and soul,—where is it to be found? Vexation,—is it not upon all the inhabitants? Nation is pitted against nation, city is jealous of city, while sin, unabashed, bold, defiant, stalks through the land.

The revival promised (v. 2). Has God spoken? Has he commanded, "Go forward"? Has he said, "Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded" (v. 7)? Has he commanded to prophesy to the very dry bones of the valley? Then the outcome will be certain. God lives and operates in the realm of the impossible. Three men were engaged in a religious enterprise that seemed hopeless. Two were ready to give up in despair, saying they were ciphers, they could do nothing. The third said, "If we are ciphers, all the better. We will place ourselves in a line and as God is one, we will place him at the head and that will make one thousand." This faith was so contagious that the three, with the help of God, won a marvelous victory.

The revival conditioned (vs. 12, 13). A plain, shrewd man, in a daily prayer-meeting, said that praying for a revival is just like "digging for water. Is there water to be had? Certainly there is, water everywhere, water without limit, under your very feet. How shall we get it? By digging for it. How far shall we dig? Five, ten, twenty, or even one hundred feet: in some places one thousand feet will not reach it. But no matter; if it is five thousand feet down, digging will without fail bring it. All you have to do is to dig until you find it." God can be found. Revivals can be promoted. If the idol groves are cut down, if the idols of your own home are stamped into the ground (v. 16), if the rubbish of sin is drilled through, if the granite foundations of rebellion and disobedience are removed, the river, the streams of which make glad the city of God, will be tapped and souls flooded with the water of life.

The revival fruitage (vs. 9, 11, 15). 1. Converts were multiplied (v. 9). "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be [were] saved" (Acts 2:47). Fire kindles fire. Converts make converts. God's church is increased, not by additions, but by creations. First, Peter, then three thousand, then five thousand. First, Saul of Tarsus, then the church at Antioch in Syria, then a string of churches from Antioch in Asia Minor to Rome. 2. Joy was multiplied (v. 14). Dr. Jowett, in a recent sermon, said, "We all recognize the dangers of an emotional religion, but there are almost equally great dangers in a religion from which emotion is entirely banished. A perfectly dry eye is blind, and a perfectly dry religion has no sight." 3. Gifts were multiplied (v. 11). A genuine revival opens the channels of benevolence as nothing else will. One of the first acts of the new church at Antioch was to send an offering to the needy saints in Judea. It is not worldly schemes for raising money that will finance the church, but the loosening of the purse strings and the spontaneous spirit of offering gifts, born in a genuine revival of love to God and service for man.

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—It is good to be on God's side.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Asa { On the right side / Destroying idolatry / Helping the people

ON WHICH SIDE ARE WE?

Preliminary. You can profitably spend two or three minutes upon the review, impressing again the thought that one sin leads to another. There are two stories in the history between the lesson of last Sabbath and that of to-day that you would do well to prepare thoroughly and tell the class in a few words. The first is the story of Abijah's conquering Jeroboam in battle and taking two cities, one of them being Bethel, where Jeroboam had set up a golden calf. Abijah honored the Lord and depended on him as he entered the fight. The other story is that of Asa and his war with Zerah the Ethiopian. Tell how he called upon the Lord for help and his prayer was answered. The victory came because he trusted God.

On the right side. Show that Asa was on the right side because he obeyed God and trusted him. Jeroboam had taken the wrong side by leading his people into idolatry. On a blackboard or on a piece of paper draw a perpendicular line and at the top on one side place the word "right," and on the other the word "wrong." On the "right" side of the line write "truth," "honesty," "love," "kindness," "obedience," "faith," or other words that are appropriate. On the "wrong" side place the opposites of those on the "right" side. Call out from the children, by questioning, what shows which side we are on. Show the class why it is better to be on the side of right than to be on the side of evil.

Destroying idolatry. Two things gave Asa courage. One was that the Lord helped him to win a great victory over his enemies, and the other was that the Lord sent a prophet to encourage him. Show how the Bible is given to us to encourage us to do right. Make it plain to the children that by doing things that are pleasing to God they will be strengthened and encouraged to do other things that will please him. If one places himself upon God's side he will have courage to do his duty. Asa was a king and had his work to do. In the lesson it was to destroy idolatry, and repair the altar of the Lord. Point out some things that children will do if they choose God's side. Those who love God are ready to do that which will please him. Refer to the child Samuel who served Eli in the house of the Lord. Call attention to the children who gave hosannas to Jesus.

Helping others. Bring out the story of the great assembly, telling who came, why they came, what they did, and the result of their coming together. Asa was on God's side, was encouraged to do a great work, and he wanted his people to have the same spirit. Call attention to the sacrifices that were made to God and show that we should give our hearts, our time, our service and our wealth to him. Explain the covenant that Judah made, and teach the children the covenant they ought to make, which is to serve the Lord.

LESSON IX

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Aug. 23.—God's care of Elijah.—1 Kings 17:1-16. Tu.—God's care of a widow.—1 Kings 17:17-24. Wed.—A prophet's reward.—Matt. 10:34-42. Th.—God's care of Gentiles.—Luke 4:16-30. Fr.—God's care in trouble.—Psa. 27. Sat.—God's care in famine.—Psa. 37:16-26. Su.—God's care of the righteous.—Mark 6:35-44.

God's Care of Elijah.—1 Kings 17: 1-16.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 14-16)

SUPT.—1 And E-li'jah the Tish'bite, who was of the inhabitants of Gil'e-ad, said unto A'hab, As the Lord God of Is'ra-el liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

School.—2 And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Che'rith, that is before Jor'dan.

4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

5 So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Che'rith, that is before Jor'dan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

8 And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,

9 Arise, get thee to Zar'e-phath, which belongeth to Zi'don, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

10 So he arose and went to Zar'e-phath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

12 And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

13 And E-li'jah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

14 For thus saith the Lord God of Is'ra-el, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went and did according to the saying of E-li'jah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by E-li'jah.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the sojourners of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. 2 And the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, 3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan. 4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. 5 So he went and did according unto the word of Jehovah; for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before the Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook. 7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

8 And the word of Jehovah came unto him, saying, 9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Sidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow there to sustain thee. 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath; and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. 11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thy hand. 12 And she said, As Jehovah thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in the jar, and a little oil in the cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. 13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it forth unto me, and afterward make for thee and for thy son. 14 For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, The jar of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that Jehovah sendeth rain upon the earth. 15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. 16 The jar of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of Jehovah, which he spake by Elijah.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. 1 Peter 5:7.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**God sustains and protects his servants.**

TOPIC.—**Divine sovereignty vindicated.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Elijah, God's messenger to Ahab. II. Hiding at Cherith. III. Sustained at Zarephath.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 908.**

PLACES.—**Samaria; the brook Cherith; Zarephath.**

INTRODUCTION.—The good reign of Asa in Judah, which continued forty-one years, was followed by that of his son Jehoshaphat, who enjoyed a peaceful and prosperous reign of twenty-five years. In Israel there was a succession of short and wicked reigns after Baasha, under Elah, Zimri and Omri, and Ahab followed with a reign more wicked than any that had preceded it. If ever a nation needed the ministrations of a prophet of God, it was the kingdom of Israel. If ever a king needed to be rebuked with severity, it was Ahab. For a kingdom whose founders were instructed in the law and worship of the true God to depart so far from that system as to introduce a degrading, idolatrous religion, and not only that, but to make every possible effort to destroy the worship of the true God, was deplorable indeed. The bold wickedness of Jezebel operating with and through the weak Ahab had brought Israel into a sadly degenerate condition morally, yet the Lord did not despair of an

improvement. The Lord had put forth efforts to bring about a reformation in Israel. He had sent a prophet out of Judah to Jeroboam with only temporary benefits (1 Kings 13: 1-10). The condition of the nation and its rulers demanded more than ordinary measures to improve their moral tone. A strong, fearless, devoted, trusting prophet was needed, and the Lord had one in the mountains of Gilead, who would speak with divine authority and make Ahab and Jezebel, as well the nation, tremble and listen. Elijah was God's man for the occasion.

COMMENTARY.—I. ELIJAH, GOD'S MESSENGER TO AHAB (v. 1). **1. Elijah the Tishbite**—The name means, "Jehovah is my God." The prophet is suddenly introduced. No information is given regarding his ancestry. Authorities are not agreed as to why he is called the Tishbite. It is commonly held that he was a native of a place called Tishbe, or Thisbe, in Naphtali, and removed eastward across the Jordan and became an inhabitant of Gilead. Others believe that he was a native of a place called Tishbeh in Gilead. In his disposition he partook of the rugged, mountainous character of the region in which he lived. His dress was a mantle of camel's-hair cloth or sheepskin worn with the wool outside, and gathered about the loins with a leathern girdle. Such was his appearance as, having left his rugged, mountain home, he appeared at the splendid palace of Ahab. **said unto Ahab**—The Lord had a man in training, under his own direction, for this important mission. The prophet appeared unheralded and abruptly began to deliver his message. **as the Lord God of Israel liveth**—"As Jehovah liveth" was an ancient form of oath in Israel. Ahab had undertaken to put away the worship of Jehovah and had denied that he was Israel's God. Elijah at once affirms the existence and power of Jehovah. **before whom I stand**—As a servant stands before his master and waits to do his bidding, so Elijah waited to do Jehovah's bidding. **not be dew nor rain**—To the people of that country the withholding of the rain meant famine. The rainfall was comparatively scanty at best, and no more than was necessary to produce the crops. A long drought would result in great suffering. Dew is very essential in that country to the growth of crops. The dews are so abundant upon Mount Carmel that vegetation there is green during the hot, dry summer, while in other parts of Palestine it is parched. **these years**—Three and one half years. See Luke 4: 25 and James 5: 17.

II. HIDING AT CHERITH (vs. 2-7). **2. the word of the Lord**—God gave directions to Elijah, but we do not know how. We know that the prophet understood them. **3. eastward**—From Ahab's palace in Samaria. **hide thyself**—Since Elijah was the apparent agency in bringing about the drought, the wicked Ahab would naturally seek his life, and it was prudent that he should conceal himself. **by the brook Cherith**—Many scholars fix the location of this stream east of the Jordan from the expression, "before Jordan," which, they say, has that signification. The brook flowed into the Jordan, but whether from the east or the west is uncertain. Elijah was in hiding from Ahab, and it would seem that he would be less likely to be found if he should go to some point east of the Jordan, than if he remained nearer Samaria; but tradition locates Cherith as a wady, or ravine, extending from the hills of Judea eastward toward Jericho. The walls of the ravine at the point shown as Elijah's hiding-place are almost perpendicular and very high. **4. drink of the brook**—This was to be his water supply. **I have commanded the ravens**—Much has been said against the idea that unclean birds brought food to the prophet, and attempts have been made to substitute the terms, "merchants," "Arabians" or "Orebites" for ravens, but there is no reason why we should not accept the literal meaning of the text. **5. he went and did**—His act shows faith in God and obedience to his command. **6. ravens brought him bread and flesh**—As the feeding of Elijah during this period was miraculous, it is needless to conjecture as to the source from which the ravens procured the supply. **morning....evening**—Two substantial meals a day sufficed the prophet during the time of famine. **7. the brook dried up**—It was probably from six months to a year that Elijah drank of the brook before the lack of rain caused it to cease to flow. See 1 Kings 18: 1 compared with Luke 4: 25 and James 5: 17.

III. SUSTAINED AT ZAREPHATH (vs. 8-16). **8. the word of the Lord**—The prophet had believed God and had been receiving food just as it was needed. One has said, "From hand to mouth is a comfortable way to live if it be from the hand of God to the mouth of God's child." He was not surprised to receive further directions from the Lord. **9. get thee to Zarephath**—A village north of Israel between Tyre and Zidon, now known as Surafend. Ahab had not yet been able to discover his hiding-place and now he passes out of his jurisdiction into a Gentile nation. **dwell there**—This was Jezebel's native country, and it was supporting and harboring the destroyer of Baal. **10. the gate of the city**—All villages and cities were then defended by walls. **widow....gathering of sticks**—It was the widow to whom the prophet was sent and the prospects for entertainment were by no means flattering. **a little water**—It is always acknowledged as a duty to give water to the thirsty in the East, even to sharing the last drops. She at once started to fulfil the request. **11. a morsel of bread**—A large demand to be made of a widow in time of famine. **12. thy God**—She was a Gentile yet she acknowledged the God of Elijah whom she probably recognized as a prophet.

13. fear not—The prophet spoke words of assurance as well as authority. His command was a severe test of her faith. If she should provide food for Elijah, she and her son must the sooner perish. **14. thus saith the Lord God of Israel**—He declared the authority upon which he spoke. **meal shall not waste, neither....oil fail**—Here was to be a miracle continuing as long as the famine lasted. **15. she went and did**—Here was faith on the part of a Gentile woman similar to the faith that Jesus found in another Gentile woman in this same region (Matt. 15: 28). **did eat many days**—From two and a half to three years. In nourishing Elijah she saved herself and her son. **16. wasted not**—The meal and the oil multiplied, not in the hoarding, but the spending.—*Henry.*

QUESTIONS.—When did Elijah appear to Ahab? Describe Elijah's appearance and character. What was his message to Ahab? Why was this famine sent upon Israel? What reason was there for Elijah to hide himself? Where was he directed to go and how was he supported? How long was he there before the brook dried up? Where was he sent from there? In what direction? What requests did he make of the woman? What miracle was performed?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The reigns of Asa and Jehoshaphat in Judah. 2. The character of Baasha, Zimri and Omri, kings of Israel. 3. The character of Ahab. 4. Jezebel. (1) Nationality. (2) Religion. (3) Character.

II. Theme.—God directs and protects his messengers.

III. The messenger.—1. Elijah's sudden appearance. 2. His nationality and home. 3. His personal appearance. 4. His character. 5. A type of John the Baptist. 6. Raised up for a specific purpose. 7. The outlook before him.

IV. The message.—1. The conditions demanding a message from God. 2. The steps by which the nation had become corrupt. 3. The message delivered. 4. Its directness and positiveness. 5. A calamity foretold which would appeal to Ahab and Jezebel. 6. The serious consequences of a drought. 7. Baal and Asherah were supposed to be the deities presiding over the fruitfulness of herds, flocks and soil. 8. The message was a defiance to the power of those deities.

V. The messenger preserved.—1. The attitude of Ahab and Jezebel toward Elijah. 2. The significance of God's command to Elijah to hide himself. 3. Elijah's responsibility for the drought, as Ahab viewed it. 4. Elijah hidden for three and a half years. 5. The sojourn at Cherith. (1) Under God's direction. (2) Location uncertain. (3) Needs supplied. 6. The drought affected him as well as the rest. 7. The removal to Zarephath. 8. The unpromising outlook for support at the widow's home. 9. Her despair. 10. Her readiness to grant his requests. 11. Her faith, even though she was a Gentile. 12. In giving the little she had she saved herself and her son.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Divine sovereignty vindicated.**

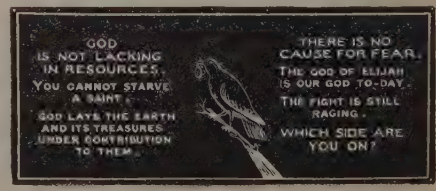
I. To the confusion of idolaters.
II. In the safety of God's servants.

I. To the confusion of idolaters. The revolt of the ten tribes had not altered the fact of God's supremacy in Israel. Though Ahab had raised a temple to Baal and though Jezebel had gathered around her an army of false prophets, and though the people were willing to have it so, the God of Israel had in reserve a man trained and willing to go forth to proclaim his sovereignty to that crooked and perverse nation. Never was reformation more called for, and never were supernatural works more necessary. Great miracles were necessary because of great and general apostasy. The appearance of such a champion as Elijah, armed with high credentials and wielding great power, marked a crisis in the history of God's ancient church. A great struggle was impending. The very existence of the church was at stake. Elijah was summoned to the court to declare God's judgment against Israel. Drought was one of the punishments declared by the law if Israel forsook God. Elijah went directly to Ahab, who could avert the calamity by his repentance. Elijah's message threatened a terrible plague, long and protracted suffering, a great national calamity. This appalling message voiced the wrath of God. The material elements were worshiped by the heathen and at this time by Israel, while the God who made them was forgotten. It was meet that men who practically denied the living God should be practically reminded of their dependence upon him. It was well that those who held Baal to be lord of nature, should be left to discover his impotence. Elijah trusted in the wisdom of God and obeyed his command. He recognized himself to be God's representative and as such manifested utmost fidelity and loyalty. He spoke under inspiration. Looking upon the scene, we recognize the value of one noble witness in the midst of public corruption and decay, and the grandeur, as well as the necessity, of a distinct personal profession of godliness. The issue was not a combat between Elijah and Ahab. It was right against wrong, faithfulness against treachery, purity against corruption.

II. In the safety of God's servants. God made his own selection among men to meet the demand at that crisis. Elijah was in the right attitude of preparedness for his work. He had placed himself absolutely and directly under the guidance of God. Strict, implicit and instant obedience characterized his life. He went forth into the busy, wicked world to the anxious and dangerous work of a prophet. He acted promptly, faithfully and with courage. He then followed the word of the Lord and went into hiding and silence to be prepared for his future great and solemn mission in the overthrow of idolatry and the vindication of the worship of the true God. For three and one half years Israel heard no more of him. That he must hide so long showed how great was the danger to which he was exposed. Elijah's food was supplied by the ordering and special providence of God. There was positive divine interposition in Elijah's preservation. His needs were provided for, though no man knew his dwelling-place. Irrational creatures were divinely directed and engaged in the service of man. The infinite Father knew his servant's destitution and sent relief by the most unexpected and seemingly impossible conveyance and as surprising to Elijah as his presence had been to Ahab. The brook dried up only to give place to greater marvels. Elijah was then sent to what seemed to be the most dangerous of all places, the territory of Jezebel's father, and to one who was an object for charity, a widow needing help. Elijah was to find a refuge and welcome. The widow was to receive temporal support and spiritual blessing. God honored the widow with his command to feed his prophet. He saw that she would believe on him if only she had a promise to authorize her faith. She was given a sharp test of faith and trust. She was to perform a generous act toward a stranger, a pious act toward a servant of Jehovah. She had to make a sacrifice and trust to a promise which seemed least likely of fulfilment. She gave her only meal to the prophet and proved God's sustaining care through two years of famine. She was a striking example of obedience and submission.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Elijah before Ahab (v. 1). John the Baptist stood before Herod. Paul stood before Agrippa. John Knox stood before Bloody Mary. Luther stood before the Diet of Worms. Elijah stood before Ahab. "As it was in the days of Noah, so it was in the days of Ahab. Suddenly in the midst of the eating and drinking, the marrying and giving in marriage, as unexpected as a peal of thunder from a clear sky, the embodied wrath of Jehovah stood before the idolatrous king." The gaunt, skeleton specter of Famine stalking up and down the land was God's Nemesis to punish Ahab for his sins. As Professor Drummond says: "The work of the avenger is a necessity. It is part of God's philanthropy. There are hells on earth into which no breath of heaven can ever come; these must be swept away. There are social soils in which only unrighteousness can flourish: these must be broken up. And that is the work of the day of vengeance. When is that day? It is now. Who is the avenger? Law. What law? Criminal law, sanitary law, social law, natural law. . . . The nature of things is God's avenger; the story of civilization is the history of Christ's throne."

Elijah before the Lord (v. 2). The God-called man is the God-fed man. The same stars which in their courses fought against Sisera, shine gently upon God's anointed. The same nature which becomes the inexorable law of punishment to the wicked, becomes a protecting angel to God's messenger. At Walsall, in 1743, John Wesley was dragged by a mob through the town and savagely beaten, while many cried, "Knock his brains out! down with him! kill him." After a time Wesley began to pray aloud and the leader of the mob, a beer-garden prize-fighter, was stricken under conviction and conducted him to his lodgings. Soon after Wesley, with his brother Charles, visited the place and received the converted prize-fighter into the society. Charles asked him what he thought of his brother. "Think of him," said he, "that he is a man of God; and God was on his side, when so many of us could not kill one man."

Elijah before the widow (vs. 10, 13). There were many widows in Israel, but to none was Elijah sent but to the one at Zarephath. He went where God prepared the way. God knew the number of the cell that held Joseph. God knew the number of the house and the name of the street where Saul was praying for light. God knew the combination of the lock on the cell door that imprisoned Peter. God knew the lonely hut of the widow in the land of Zidon. While Elijah was obedient and was following the Lord's directions, it was the trustful, implicit obedience of this widow that brought blessing and life. The words, "Fear not," came to her with all the assurance of confirmation of the previous intimation which she had received (v. 9). I have read a little poem entitled, "The Master is Coming," in which a woman is represented as preparing for the coming of the Lord. She is so busy setting the house in order, cleaning and dusting, that she has no time to comfort one who came to her in sorrow, or to feed a hungry cripple, or to mother a homeless child who came to her door. Then the Master stood before her, grieved because she had sent him away three times that day. "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me" (Matt. 25:45).

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—God is able to supply all of our needs.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Elijah { The Lord's prophet / Fearless and fruitful / Preserved

A prophet of the Lord. Explain that a prophet is one who speaks God's words or foretells future events. God only can enable men to tell what will take place in the future. Tell the story of Elijah's home in the wild mountain region, his manner of dress and his appearance before Ahab. Tell why there was need of the prophet's message at Samaria. Tell the story of Jonah's preaching at Nineveh. Teach the children that all should respect those who are called to speak the words of God as ministers. The story of the destruction of the children who mocked the prophet Elisha would be appropriate. Explain to the children that the people in Elijah's time did not have the Bible as we do now, and there was great need of prophets to bear messages from God to them.

Elijah fearless and faithful. God had been training him in the wilderness for his great work. Tell the story of Moses' being trained for forty years in the desert for leadership of the Israelites. Draw a perpendicular line and on one side write "Elijah" and on the other "Ahab." Under each write the words which express their respective characters. Under Elijah's name you will have such words as pious, faithful, fearless, trusting, godly, obedient; and under Ahab's name such words as wicked, cruel, idolatrous, impious, cowardly. Draw out the meaning of Elijah's message to Ahab. Picture the prophet in his coarse attire standing before the king. Show the danger that Elijah was in while telling Ahab such a message. The king had the power of life and death over his subjects, and Ahab would not hesitate to take the prophet's life.

Elijah preserved from death. Show how careful God was to direct the prophet to a safe hiding-place. Elijah was to pray and no rain would fall until he should pray for rain. That time was three and a half years, and God was to keep the prophet alive at least that long. Tell the two places where he was hidden all that time, and how the king looked for him but could not find him. By questions draw out from the children the story of Elijah fed by the ravens at Cherith. The famine was over all the country but God saw that Elijah was provided for. Note the distance and the direction of Zarephath from Cherith. Get before the children a vivid picture of Elijah's arrival at the gates of Zarephath and his meeting with the woman who was to sustain him during the remainder of the famine. Make a very practical lesson of her giving the last she had in faith, and the abundance that came to her and her son. Refer to the increase of the widow's oil, the water turned to wine at Cana or the multitudes fed in the days when Jesus was on earth. Tell about God's protection over missionaries who go at his call to carry the gospel to the heathen. The true missionary puts his life in God's hands.

LESSON X

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Aug. 30.—Elijah's challenge.—1 Kings 18: 15-29. Tu.—Elijah and the prophets of Baal.—1 Kings 18: 30-39. Wed.—The drought relieved.—1 Kings 18: 41-46. Th.—Elijah a man of prayer.—James 5: 12-20. Fr.—God's approach in the storm.—Psa. 18: 6-17. Sat.—Flame from Sinai.—Exod. 19: 16-25. Su.—Flame from the heavenly Jerusalem.—Heb. 12: 18-29.

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal. 1 Kings 18: 16-40. Print 18: 30-39.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 36, 37)

SUPT.—30 And E-li'jah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

School.—31 And E-li'jah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Ja'cob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Is'ra-el shall be thy name:

32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

34 And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time.

35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that E-li'jah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of A'bra-ham, I'saac, and of Is'ra-el, let it be known this day that thou art God in Is'ra-el, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God.

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30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me; and all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of Jehovah that was thrown down. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of Jehovah came, saying, Israel shall be thy name. 32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of Jehovah; and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. 33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it on the wood. And he said, Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt-offering, and on the wood. 34 And he said, Do it the second time; and they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time; and they did it the third time. 35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. 36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening oblation, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. 37 Hear me, O Jehovah, hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. 38 Then the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Jehovah, he is God; Jehovah, he is God.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous. Prov. 15: 29.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord never fails those who trust him.**

TOPIC.—**The claims of Deity.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Elijah meets Ahab. II. A test proposed. III. Baal proved powerless. IV. The answer by fire.**

TIME.—**B. C. 905.**

PLACE.—**Mount Carmel.**

INTRODUCTION.—Elijah's stay at Zarephath was the means of sustaining the widow's family through the drought, and her kindness in caring for him was rewarded by the raising of her son to life. The three and a half years of drought had not availed to turn the idolatrous Ahab and Jezebel from their wicked course. Jezebel had slain the prophets of the Lord in an effort to destroy utterly the worship of Jehovah from the land. Obadiah, Ahab's servant, had undertaken to thwart her scheme by hiding a hundred prophets in caves, hence devotion to the true God was not altogether wanting. The impotence of their god Baal had been continuously demonstrated during this period. He was supposed to be the sun-god and the god of fruitfulness and harvests, but the fields had remained barren in spite of the devotion of Israel to his worship. Baal was a failure. The test which was made at Carmel was most favorable to the followers of Baal, if their claims meant anything. Being the sun-god, he was supposed to have full power over fire, and hence it would be an easy thing for him to apply fire to the waiting sacrifice. Here again was failure and the falsity of Baal-worship was demonstrated.

COMMENTARY.—I. ELIJAH MEETS AHAB (vs. 16-20). The time came when the Lord would put an end to the drought which had brought great distress to Israel. Ahab and his servant Obadiah had started out in different directions in search of pasturage to save the flocks and herds from starvation. Elijah met Obadiah on the way and announced that he would meet Ahab. Obadiah knew that the king had sought for the prophet and feared that, if he told Ahab where he was, he would disappear and still further elude his search. Elijah assured Obadiah that he would meet Ahab, and Obadiah told the king, who at once went to meet the prophet. Upon meeting him he accused Elijah of bringing the drought and the accompanying distresses upon Israel. The prophet boldly told the king that his sins and those of his father's house had brought the trouble on the nation. Elijah immediately became the master of the situation and told Ahab to summon the prophets of Baal and those of Asherah, the female deity corresponding to Baal, to Mount Carmel, and Ahab gathered the prophets there. The place of meeting was on the eastern

part of Mount Carmel, from which point the Mediterranean Sea can be seen to the west, and the beautiful plain of Esdraelon to the east. Jezreel, Ahab's capital, was in plain sight, as also the scene of several of Israel's historic battles.

II. A TEST PROPOSED (vs. 21-24). Not only had the prophets assembled at Mount Carmel, but also the people came. Elijah called upon the people to cease halting, or limping and staggering about between the worship of Jehovah and that of Baal. It was to be definitely determined which was the true God. He was the only representative of the true religion and the prophets of Baal were many, but he proposed the test of an answer by fire to show the people the truth. No one but an Elijah could put forth such a challenge, and he did it in the fear of the Lord and in faith in him. The people could only declare the test to be a fair one. The followers of Baal claimed much for the power of their deity. He was the sun-god, and consequently was in touch with the powerful agency, fire; hence he would be expected to respond to Elijah's challenge and send fire to consume the sacrifice.

III. BAAL PROVED POWERLESS (vs. 25-29). Elijah called upon the prophets to choose their bullock for a sacrifice and prepare it, and then call upon their gods for an answer by fire. He thought best to caution them to put no fire under the sacrifice, for he doubtless knew the trickery to which the followers of false gods sometimes resorted. He gave them the first chance to show what their deity, Baal, the sun-god, could do. There was no lack of earnestness on the part of the worshipers of Baal. They called loudly, and exercised themselves violently in the hope that fire might fall to consume the sacrifice. There is a tradition that a man was concealed under the altar, that he might kindle the fire at the proper time, but he was smothered before he lighted it. This is only a tradition and can not be depended on. With all the frantic efforts of the Baal-worshipers no fire fell. Elijah held them up to ridicule in the taunts which he hurled at them, and this spurred them on to cry more loudly and to leap more frantically. They even cut their flesh with knives until the blood flowed. They tried from morning until the time of the evening sacrifice, or three o'clock, to get an answer, but their efforts were all in vain. Elijah was certain that this would be the outcome, but the priests of Baal had exerted themselves to the utmost with the hope that he would apply fire to their sacrifice. They had occupied nearly the entire day. They had called upon their god with loud voices. They had inflicted pain upon themselves. There was nothing more that they could do. They had signally failed. It was deeply humiliating to them to acknowledge that Baal was either unable or unwilling to do what they most earnestly desired. Their only hope, after his failure to answer, was that Elijah's efforts would be equally unsuccessful. It would then appear that the God whom Elijah served was no more powerful than was Baal.

IV. THE ANSWER BY FIRE (vs. 30-40). **30. come near**—There was a calmness in the prophet's manner that was in strange contrast to the frenzy of the Baal-worshipers. The people were invited to witness all that was to be done. **repaired the altar**—Not the altar of Baal but an altar of Jehovah that had been used long before this time. **31. twelve stones**—It is noticeable that Elijah recognized Israel, not as two kingdoms, but as composed of twelve tribes. See Josh. 4:5. **Israel shall be thy name**—Israel means "prince of God," and was the name given to Jacob at Peniel (Gen. 32:28). **32. in the name of the Lord**—This expression characterizes all of Elijah's acts. It was for the honor of Jehovah that the people and the priests were called together at Carmel. **a trench**—To catch the water that was to be poured upon the sacrifice. **two measures**—The measure was the "seah," containing from one and one half to three gallons. Some think the depth of the trench was as great as the height of the two-seah measure. **33. put the wood in order,** etc.—Thus far the preparations made were similar to those of the priests of Baal. **fill four barrels**—The water-jars such as were used for carrying water and containing from three to five gallons each. **pour it**—There must be no occasion to say that there was fire hidden somewhere about the altar. False religions have resorted to deception to establish their claims to supernatural power, but it must be made clear that there is no trickery here. **34. third time**—Twelve jars were used, "corresponding to the twelve stones of the altar, and for the same symbolic reason."—*Edersheim.* **35. filled the trench**—Divine power was to be displayed in a remarkable way. To explain the source of the supply of water during the drought, Tristram says, "Close by the place of sacrifice, shaded by a noble old tree, is a large, natural cistern of sweet water, which the people say is never exhausted." The river Kishon flows by the base of the mountain and water might have been procured from there if the fountain or cistern was empty. It is reasonable to suppose that water had been carried to the place of sacrifice before Elijah was ready to use it.

36. came near—In calm and trustful boldness. **Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel**—Elijah's address to God was made so complete that no one could doubt to whom he was appealing. **let it be known**—The prophet wished two things made clear: first, that there was a God in Israel, and second, that he was God's servant. **37. hear me, O Lord**—Elijah's confidence in God finds most pronounced expression in the words of this brief prayer. The answer was not delayed. **turned their heart back again**—His great desire was that the people should turn from idolatry to God. **38. the fire of the Lord fell**—There was no mistaking its direction nor its power. It came from above and burned downward, commencing with the sacrifice and ending with the water in the trench. **39. fell on their faces**—They were not only convinced that it was the work of God but fell down before him in an act of worship. **the Lord, he is the God**—The test had declared the existence and power of Jehovah, and the victory of Elijah over the prophets of Baal was complete. **40.** The prophets of Baal were taken down to the river Kishon and slain. This was in accordance with God's law that idolaters were to be put to death. The vindication of Jehovah showed that Baal-worship was false worship, and that the followers of Baal were either deceived or were themselves deceivers.

QUESTIONS.—To whom was Elijah sent? What was the feeling of the king toward Elijah? Who arranged for the assembly at Mount Carmel? What test was to be made? Who represented the true God, and who represented the false gods? Describe the efforts of the priests of Baal. Describe Elijah's course after the failure of the priests of Baal. Describe the results of Elijah's prayer. What was remarkable about the prayer? What truths does the lesson teach?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. Trace Elijah's history as given in the preceding lesson. 2. The time spent at Zarephath. 3. Elijah's faith and patience.

II. THEME.—God's cause vindicated.

III. CALLED FROM RETIREMENT.—1. Elijah had been successfully hidden from Ahab who had persistently searched for him. 2. The promise of rain. 3. The severity of the famine. 4. The meeting with Obadiah. 5. The office and character of Obadiah. 6. Obadiah's fearfulness.

IV. THE INTERVIEW OF ELIJAH WITH AHAB.—1. The courage of Elijah in going to meet Ahab. 2. Elijah charged with troubling Israel. (1) Elijah the messenger of God. (2) Ahab's failure to recognize that he himself was bringing trouble upon the nation. 3. Note the noble bearing of the prophet in this interview. 4. The prophet becomes the master and commands the king. 5. The assembly ordered by Elijah. 6. The assembly called together by the king. 7. The place of the assembly. 8. The character of the assembly.

V. THE TEST PROPOSED.—1. Halting between two opinions. (1) The two opinions. (2) Ability to choose. (3) The famine was sent to arouse them to take the right stand. (4) The silence of the people. 2. Those on the side of Baal compared with those on the side of God. 3. The test proposed. (1) Elijah's faith and courage. (2) Sources of his strength. (3) The nature of the test. (4) The challenge accepted.

VI. THE TEST MADE.—1. The two altars compared. 2. The preparation of the followers of Baal, and their efforts to call down fire. 3. The failure. 4. Elijah's preparation of the sacrifice compared with that of Baal's worshipers. (1) In the name of the Lord. (2) The people called to witness. (3) The water poured on. Its purpose. 5. Elijah's prayer. (1) Brief. (2) Directed to the God of Israel. (3) Calm and dignified. (4) Uttered in faith. (5) The answer. 6. The fire. (1) From above. (2) Its course. (3) Its power. 7. The effect on the people. (1) Awed. (2) Convinced. (3) Turned from idolatry.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**The claims of deity.**

I. Revealed the cause of calamity.
II. Demanded the devotion of Israel.
III. Required the overthrow of idolatry.

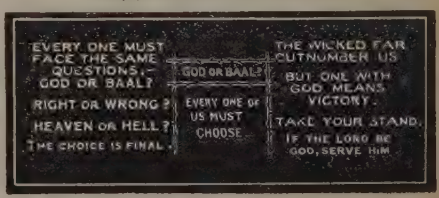
I. Revealed the cause of calamity. Our lesson takes up the controversy between Ahab and Elijah, as to the cause of the trouble which had come upon Israel. The alternative lay between Jehovah and Baal, and the object of a national gathering was to decide which was to be Israel's God. Elijah insisted upon the distinction which existed between the worship of Baal and the worship of Jehovah. It was not a matter of argument, but of demonstration. The ordeal proposed was peculiarly appropriate and marked a great occasion. Jehovah had often answered by fire. Baal was the heathen god of fire. The test which alone met Israel's need, could alone prove Israel's God. The claims of deity must be established in deeds that only God could perform. Elijah would have the decision of the people spring from real convictions, based on sufficient proof. He would end the dishonor of God by the overthrow of idolatry, everywhere visible in Israel. Ahab had not paused to ask what moved Elijah to call for a drought or why his God should send it. Elijah charged Ahab with the ruin of his country. He charged him with complicity in the sin of Jeroboam, which had plunged the chosen nation into deepest degradation. With a clear insight Elijah touched the secret of the nation's sorrow. The root of the menacing peril, the desolating misfortune, lay in the broken altar.

II. Demanded the devotion of Israel. Elijah stood alone, undaunted, a witness for Jehovah appealing to the multitudes to cease their unworthy hesitation between unreconcilable services. Israel's inconsistency lay in an attempt to blend the claims of Jehovah and Baal, in wavering between them, an attempt to accomplish an impossibility, an insult to the authority and character of God. The reconstruction of spiritual life in Israel must begin at the point of its incipient overthrow. The drought and famine had prepared their stubborn hearts for Elijah's appeal and disposed them to consider.

III. Required the overthrow of idolatry. Elijah proved to be the man of the hour. To be zealous, to be a reformer, to seek to restore truth and religion to their former rule, when the alternative was ruin or revival, extirpation or reform, made his task most arduous and important. Nothing less than earnest consecration and strong courage on Elijah's part could have enabled him to endure his task at Mount Carmel. He gave precedence to his opponents at every point. He reduced his own resources to a minimum to show that truth was stronger than error. The people were all the more impressed by the final victory because of the marked inequality of the conflict. The priests of Baal exhibited passionate earnestness, furious, persistent prayer and an agony of entreaty. Full opportunity was given to show the worth of their idolatries and superstitions. They had first trial and did their utmost. When evening came they gave up the contest in despair. Then Elijah called the people to the broken altar, a sad evidence of the wicked zeal of Jezebel and a significant sign of the times. The repair of the altar appeared incidental. It meant to Israel the retracing of their steps of disobedience until they stood at the point of their departure from the precepts of the Lord. Calamity and disaster had come as a result of national departure from the worship of Jehovah. In itself the altar was nothing, but it was the place of sacrifice, the center of fellowship and the sign of the covenant. Elijah's prayer stood in contrast to the clamor of Baal's priests. It was offered at the time of the evening sacrifice and pleaded for the honor of God and for mercy upon the penitent. When Elijah's faith was expressed in words, there came at once the answer of the living God. The demonstration was irresistible. The conflict with idolatry was settled. The claims of the living God were sustained. Retribution upon Baal's prophets was swift according to the law of God. Their destruction was the removal of temptation from Israel.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The insufficiency of Baal. Joseph Cook, in one of his lectures, submits the argument that God wills the happiness of the race; that the race to be happy must have a perfect religion; that that perfect religion must produce pardon for sin, peace of conscience and reconciliation with God. What modern Baal-worshiper finds these three things? Come, now, ye worshipers of the Baal-god of wealth! What is your answer? Where is your pardon of sin and your peace of mind and your reconciliation with God? Come, now, all ye worshipers of the Baal-gods of pleasure, of fashion, of worldly honor, of lust, of power, call on your gods for help. Sin stalks abroad, cracking his taskmaster's whip over the backs of his slaves. Conscience stings with remorse and pungent condemnation. God stands as one holding the reins of the steeds of divine wrath, lest they prematurely visit sinners with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Where is your peace? Where is the power of your gods? Do they answer? Nay, verily, the silence of the Baal-gods of Mount Carmel has lain along the passing centuries until now, and is only punctuated by the wails of the lost who have trusted in gods that could not hear. Years ago a missionary and his wife went to the Samoan Islands. From time to time friends sent boxes of clothing and other comforts. In one of these was a very large doll which opened and closed its eyes. The Catholics had opened a mission and had an image of the virgin Mary, but its eyes were fixed. The natives were greatly interested in this image, but when they heard of the doll, they gathered in crowds to see it. After watching it for a time and noting with great wonder the opening and shutting of its eyes, they said, "We have seen the god of the Roman Catholics; we have also seen the plaything of the English children; the plaything opens its eyes, but the eyes of the Catholic god are fixed; greater is the plaything of the Protestants than the idol of the Romanists. What must the God of the Protestants be?" He is the God of power.

The all-sufficiency of God. The world demands verities rather than vouchers; proofs rather than parchments; dependence rather than diplomas. But, applied to religion, with most people the value and office of God is simply what he can do for them in a temporal way. Hence the taunting cry to Christ to come down from the cross, and to prove his divinity by that visible demonstration of supernatural power. The Baal-worshipers of Israel, when they saw the fire falling, the sacrifice consumed and the altar itself melt away, cried out, "The Lord, he is the God! The Lord, he is the God!" But far greater in its results is that faith which accepts the atoning mercy of Christ and crowns him in the heart and life, Lord of all. Altars are easily built. Only God can supply the flame. Mark Guy Pearse said, "Every age must have its own proof. The church can not inherit the evidences, she must create them. The prophet does not stand and tell the people of the wonders that God has wrought for their fathers in Egypt and at the Red Sea. If the gospel can not do to-day what it did aforetime, it is a failure." But that is just what it does. The fire still falls. Divine power still transforms men. The most agonized efforts of human cults still end in silence while the simple prayer of a humble believer inaugurates moral revolutions. Therefore "if God be God, follow him." G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The Lord hears and answers true prayer.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

ELIJAH AND AHAB

Priests of Baal trusting in false gods } Defeated

Elijah trusting in Jehovah } Victorious

Elijah and Ahab. Review the comparison between these two men as drawn in the preceding lesson. Call for brief stories of what was contained in that lesson about Elijah. Tell how the prophet was safely hidden from the wicked and angry king and queen during the three and one half years of the famine. Here is a fine opportunity to teach the lesson that God knows all things and cares for his children. Impress upon the minds of the children the truth that the famine was sent upon Israel to show them the wickedness of forsaking the true God and serving idols. Tell the story of God's calling Elijah from his hiding-place to meet Ahab, and the meeting of the two men. Because God was with the prophet and protected him, Ahab did him no harm. Explain the test that Elijah proposed to make before all the priests of Baal and the people of Israel to show who was the true God.

Priests of Baal defeated. The children have an idea of number and will easily see how large a majority there was on Baal's side. The Baal-priests had the first chance. Draw an outline picture of an altar and tell how the wood and the sacrifice were arranged. Give a word picture of the idolatrous priests trying to get their god to send fire to burn the sacrifice. Let the picture be vivid but truthful. The children will be likely to ask questions about it, but if they do not, you can impress the story by asking them questions. Do not omit to consider Elijah's idea of their god as he mocked them at noon, and how frantic the Baal-priests were until three o'clock in the afternoon, when they acknowledged themselves defeated. Recall the first commandment, and explain in what way the people of Israel under the influence of Ahab and Jezebel had been violating it. The god they were worshiping could not hear.

Elijah victorious. Tell what there was about Elijah that secured the victory for his side. Picture the altar as he repaired it, and all the preparations which he made. Show in what respects the altars and preparations were alike and how they differed. Explain the object in pouring water on the sacrifice. Read the prayer of Elijah slowly and explain it to the children. You can draw an impressive word picture of the scene, as Elijah, there alone, defending the cause of true religion, prayed to Jehovah, and as the fire fell upon the sacrifice. The effects of the fire were astonishing. The children never saw anything like that, nor had the people on Mount Carmel previously to that time. Dwell upon the effect of this test upon the people. The stories of this lesson carry with them their own teachings. Elijah is one of the Old Testament worthies because he believed God and obeyed him, daring to do anything or go anywhere that he was commanded by the Lord.

LESSON XI

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Sept. 6.—Elijah's flight.—1 Kings 19:1-14. Tu.—Elijah's return.—1 Kings 19:15-21. Wed.—Appeal of Moses.—Num. 11:1-15. Th.—The cry of despair.—Psa. 73:1-22. Fr.—Jonah's displeasure.—Jonah 3:10-4:11. Sat.—More than conquerors.—Rom. 8:31-39. Su.—The voice of the Spirit.—John 16:1-15.

Elijah's Flight and Return. 1 Kings 19: 1-21. Print 19: 8-18.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 9, 10)

SUPT.—8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Hor'eb the mount of God.

School.—9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, E-li'jah?

10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Is'ra-el have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake:

12 And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

13 And it was so, when E-li'jah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, E-li'jah?

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: because the children of Is'ra-el have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

15 And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Da-mas'cus: and when thou comest, anoint Ha-za'el to be king over Syr'i-a:

16 And Je'hu the son of Nim'shi shalt thou anoint to be king over Is'ra-el: and E-li'sha the son of Sha'phat of A-bel-me-ho'lah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Ha-za'el shall Je'hu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Je'hu shall E-li'sha slay.

18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Is'ra-el, all the knees which have not bowed unto Ba'al, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

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8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of Jehovah came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? 10 And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. 11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before Jehovah. And, behold, Jehovah passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah; but Jehovah was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but Jehovah was not in the earthquake: 12 and after the earthquake a fire; but Jehovah was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. 13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? 14 And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

15 And Jehovah said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; 16 and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. 17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. 18 Yet will I leave me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Be still, and know that I am God. Psa. 46:10.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord gives strength and courage to his children.**

TOPIC.—**God's gifts to Elijah.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Elijah fleeing from Jezebel. II. Miraculously fed. III. At Horeb. IV. Calls Elisha.**

TIME.—**B. C. 905.**

PLACES.—**Jezreel; Beer-sheba; Horeb.**

INTRODUCTION.—As Elijah had prayed that the rain might be withheld, so also he prayed that the drought might be broken. His attitude in prayer and his persistency indicated his humility, his earnestness, his faith. Both the king and the prophet had returned from the Kishon after the slaughter of the prophets of Baal, the one to feast, the other to pray; and as the small cloud appeared over the Mediterranean Sea, low on the horizon, a sure precursor of rain in that country, Elijah sent the king word to hasten to Jezreel, because the storm was at hand. The prophet was given supernatural strength as he ran before Ahab's chariot the sixteen or seventeen miles from the summit of Carmel to the gates of Jezreel, in the storm that had already broken in fury upon the land that had lain parched for three and one half years. The cause of true religion had realized a distinct triumph upon Mount Carmel. In the destruction of the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal the Mosaic command (Deut. 17:2-7) had been obeyed, and an important step had been taken in the overthrow of idolatry. The hand of Jehovah was plainly seen in the fire that fell to consume the sacrifice upon his altar and in the rain that followed in answer to Elijah's prayer; and yet the hardness of Jezebel's heart and the fickle disposition of Ahab blocked the progress of the reform so notably begun. The series of events in Elijah's life commencing with his appearance in Israel and proceeding through the events of this lesson shows human possibilities and limitations. Elijah on Carmel seemed clothed with divine author-

ity, but Elijah in the wilderness under the juniper tree seemed left to himself. His subsequent history is full of instructive lessons.

COMMENTARY.—I. ELIJAH FLEEING FROM JEZEBEL (vs. 1-3). Jezebel had remained away from Carmel and had kept the priests of Asherah away also. Ahab told her of the fruitless efforts of the followers of Baal to obtain an answer from their god; of Elijah's mocking them; of the calm faith of the prophet; of the descending fire, which consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the altar, the dust and the water; of the cry of the people, "The Lord, he is the God"; of the slaughter of the prophets of Baal and of Elijah's prediction of rain. Jezebel was so angry upon hearing these things, that she took a most solemn oath that Elijah should be put to death before another day was over, and sent the prophet a message to this effect. It may have been fear on her part that kept her from sending an executioner to take his life at once. The message gave Elijah notice of conditions and ample time to make his escape. The message showed that his life was in danger at the hands of this angry and fiendish woman, and prudence led him to do his part in securing his own safety. The record does not show that the Lord had anything further for the prophet to do in Jezreel at that time. He fled to Beer-sheba in the southern part of the kingdom of Judah. Here he was beyond the jurisdiction of Ahab. Beer-sheba was nearly one hundred miles south of Jezreel. It was one of the earliest settled places in Canaan. The name, which means the well of the oath, was given by Abraham to the well he dug there; for an oath was taken by Abraham and Abimelech, that the well was the property of the former. Beer-sheba still exists and is inhabited by Mohammedans who are especially fanatical. A Christian mission is now maintained there.

II. MIRACULOUSLY FED (vs. 4-8). **4-7.** Elijah wished to be alone; he therefore left his servant, who had been with him at Carmel and had accompanied him thus far on his journey, and went alone a day's journey into the wilderness. He sat in the shade of a juniper tree, a shrub ten or twelve feet high, on the edge of the desert. The bold prophet had become disheartened. The marvelous display of power on Carmel had not been followed by the wide-spread reformation he had expected. He was worn and faint from his labors and journey, and from hunger. He felt as if he had done all he could. In wishing that he might die he showed human frailty. His grief and weariness induced sleep. Twice an angel awakened him and pointed to food that was in readiness for him. Food and water were miraculously provided for him, as they had been repeatedly before at Cherith and Zarephath. Even if Elijah had made a mistake in fleeing from Jezebel, his journey was to be turned to good account for him. **8. meat**—Food. **forty days and forty nights**—Moses had twice fasted the same length of time, and Jesus also fasted forty days.

III. AT HOREB (vs. 9-18). **9. unto a cave**—A ruined chapel covers the rock on which the prophet is supposed to have rested. The granite rocks enclose it on every side, as though it were a natural sanctuary.—*Stanley.* **what doest thou here**—The Lord by this question brought a tender reproof to Elijah, and proceeded to give him a deeper revelation of himself than he had ever before received. **10. jealous**—He had defended the honor of Jehovah. **forsaken thy covenant,** etc.—Three charges are made,—disobedience, sacrilege and murder. **I only, am left**—Elijah was the only one on Carmel to defend the God of Israel, and in his despondency and ignorance he thought he was the only one in the nation loyal to Jehovah. **they seek my life**—In the prophet's belief the true religion was all but stamped out. **11. go forth**—The Lord was now ready to teach Elijah his much-needed lesson. He would first gain his attention and then give instruction. **wind....earthquake**—These were but the manifestations of God's power, and Elijah recognized them as such. **12. a fire**—A constant blaze of lightning. **the Lord was not in the fire**—He might have spoken by means of the wind or the earthquake or the fire, but he desired to teach Elijah a lesson that could not be presented in that way. **still small voice**—With the voice came the conviction to the prophet that God was speaking directly to him. **13. wrapped his face in his mantle**—An act of reverence and awe. He waited to hear what the Lord would say further to him. He heard the question recorded in verse 9 repeated, and answered it in the same way. **14. shalt thou anoint**—The Lord thus disclosed to his servant something of the future. **15. go, return**—Elijah had traveled three hundred miles on foot to receive his orders, and must return the entire distance to carry them out. **Damascus**—The capital of Syria. **anoint**—An important commission was given Elijah. "It is the word of the Lord foretelling the agencies by which the wicked house of Ahab shall be destroyed."—*Whedon.* Elijah anointed Elisha to be a prophet in his stead, but we have no record that he anointed Hazael or Jehu, yet he may have done so privately. His successors performed these offices.

17. Hazael....Jehu....Elisha—The sins of Ahab and Jezebel were to be avenged and a Gentile king, an Israelitish king and a prophet of the Lord were to have part in the punishment to be inflicted. **18. yet will I leave me seven thousand** (*R. V.*)—Elijah was the only representative of Jehovah on Mount Carmel and he thought he was the only one in Israel, but the Lord let him know that there were thousands who were true to him and would remain true. They had not forsaken God nor had they bowed down to Baal. **not kissed him**—It is a common practise for idolaters to kiss their idols or kiss their hands at them.

IV. CALLS ELISHA (vs. 19-21). Elijah's northward journey must have been a joyous one compared with that to Horeb. His mission to Elisha was entirely successful and that young man at once prepared to follow him after Elijah's mantle had been thrown upon him. Elisha became his constant attendant, after he had returned to his home and had made a farewell feast for his people. Elijah had told him to go back to his home and in doing so had brought a test upon him. Elisha was convinced that a divine call was upon him, and he went with Elijah and was associated with him until Elijah's translation. He was the great prophet's worthy successor.

QUESTIONS.—Describe the scene of Elijah at prayer for rain. Describe the journey to Jezreel. What was Jezebel's feeling toward Elijah as she learned what had been done at Carmel? Where did the prophet go from Jezreel? For what did Elijah wish? How was he fed in the wilderness? Describe Elijah's experience at Horeb. Upon what mission was he sent from Horeb? What did Elisha do after Elijah had cast his mantle upon him?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The drought in Israel broken. (1) Elijah on Mount Carmel after his victory. (2) No indications of rain. (3) Elijah's attitude in prayer. (4) His persistency. (5) His commands to his servant to look for signs of rain. (6) Compare the prayer for rain with the prayer for fire. (7) Storms develop suddenly in that country. (8) The downpour. 2. The run to Jezreel. 3. Elijah was loyal to his king. 4. Ahab was then favorable to Elijah.

II. THEME.—Comfort for the disheartened.

III. ELIJAH IN FLIGHT.—1. The effect of Jezebel's angry threat. 2. Jezebel did not see the test on Mount Carmel. 3. The prophet's flight to Beer-sheba to save his life. Did he make a mistake in fleeing? 4. His flight to save his life compared with his desire to die. 5. His mental distress over the condition of Israel, and his bodily weariness and hunger together with his loneliness served to dishearten him deeply. 6. Human weakness displayed.

IV. ELIJAH REFRESHED AND ENCOURAGED.—1. Refreshed by sleep. 2. Refreshed by food miraculously provided. 3. His own explanation of his presence in the wilderness. (1) The covenant broken by Israel. (2) The true worship destroyed. (3) His own life sought. 4. God's power in nature displayed. 5. God was in the fire at Carmel, but not, in an especial sense, at Horeb. 6. The voice distinctly recognized and its effect upon Elijah. The effect of God's voice upon us. 7. God encouraged Elijah by preserving his life and speaking to him. 8. The seven thousand in Israel faithful to God.

V. A NEW MISSION.—1. It is an encouragement to one if he has something to do and ability to do it. 2. The prophet's work not yet done. 3. If the marvelous event on Carmel would not destroy the worship of Baal, other means would be employed. Hazael, Jehu and Elisha to be instrumental in its overthrow. 4. Elisha appointed Elijah's successor. (1) A busy man. (2) A ready man. (3) An obedient man. (4) A successful man.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**God's gifts to Elijah.**

I. Restoration.
II. Revelation.
III. Recommission.

I. Restoration. Elijah had no time to magnify himself after his triumph on Mount Carmel. Jezebel's message to him displayed only determined and increased hostility. It was harder to bear than all his previous hardships. Not being present on Carmel, Jezebel had received with skeptical scorn the report from Ahab. In a passionate fury she declared her purpose to withstand Elijah. This was the apparent blighting of Elijah's long expected hopes, after prayer and waiting and mightiest effort. It was at that time God suffered him to pass through a most severe mental conflict. It was a spiritual crisis in his life to meet a spiritual necessity. It prevented self-exaltation in the triumphs of God's cause, and prepared Elijah to accept of different methods as God presented them. For the time his depression seemed almost overwhelming. He looked for better fruit of his ministry than he could discern. He dwelt in bitter sorrow upon the conditions as he saw them, that God's covenant had been forsaken, his altars thrown down and his prophets slain. That was the darkest hour in the prophet's history. God alone could understand and rightly judge him. God controlled Elijah's conduct by gentle agencies. His pity was as evident as his knowledge. God's first care was to give Elijah rest and sleep. His strength had endured a terrible strain on Mount Carmel.

II. Revelation. God's further method of relief included a manifestation of himself. Elijah needed special communication from God. He needed to be corrected in his judgment as to his own labors and the cause of truth. He needed the divine assurance that his labors had accomplished more than he had supposed, that God had seven thousand witnesses to the fact, who had been strengthened by his heroism. Elijah's overwhelming anguish of soul was like the whirlwind which prepared the way for the soft whisper of heavenly peace. A question from God suggested his responsibility. When the still, small voice fell upon his ear, he was smitten to the heart and humbled at Jehovah's feet. God's question was adapted to convince, reprove and humble Elijah. He told God all that pressed upon his heart. The still, small voice which only a listening man could hear, was more divine and mightier than all that Elijah had witnessed before. There was a great difference between God's power and God's presence. Amid the war of elements the prophet was unmoved by fear. The still, small voice caused him to cover his face with his mantle and bow in humble worship in the recognized presence of God.

III. Recommission. God addressed Elijah by name. He still had confidence in him. He was not cast aside, condemned. God had more work for him to do. He was to be strengthened and cheered by companionship. Continued isolation was not necessary. Though disappointed, Elijah might live and do good work for God, not by a continuation of Carmel's triumph, but by other means. Just as the hurricane and the earthquake made the still, small voice more impressive and subduing, so Elijah's ministry had done its work thus far. Invasion, revolution and judgments from God were to do their part in Israel through other instruments than Elijah. The prophet was delivered from his depression by a visitation from God, by the assurance of success and the appointment to future work. For his own sake and the good of others he must be up and doing. With renewed physical powers, new occupation, prospective companionship and the association with faithful prophets in Israel, Elijah left the mount with his views all changed, with his thoughts of God corrected. Though Israel was under the thraldom of idolatry, Elijah could be content to be God's minister and know that God was over all. After this wholesome discipline and humiliation Elijah could go forth with renewed strength and courage and with clearer vision.

T. B. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

A pertinent question. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" (v. 9). Elijah, the fearless prophet who stood before Ahab, the man who had been miraculously preserved for three years and a half, the man who had prayed fire down from heaven, the man who had successfully withstood eight hundred fifty prophets of Baal, the man who had prayed a great rain out of skies of brass, Elijah, was hiding in a cave in the desert. Is it any excuse to say, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts"? Is it any apology to say, "The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant"? Is it any defense to say, "I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away"? Is it right to pity yourself, when there are thousands of others to pity? Is it an evidence of grace to care for yourself, when all heaven cares for you? Is it being counted faithful as a steward to hide in a cave because the work of reformation did not go on just as you thought it would? "Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?" (Job 40:7, 8).

The hidings of power. "And there was the hiding of his power" (Hab. 3:4). The lesson for Elijah to learn was that God could be in a still, small voice just as much as in a mighty earthquake, a howling wind or a devouring flame. Because fire fell on Mount Carmel, Elijah need not think that was the only way God could come. Because the wicked Jezebel was not smitten by a lightning bolt, was no reason why he should crawl into a hole in the ground. An old fable tells how the wind and the sun had an argument as to which possessed the greater power. To settle the controversy they selected a traveler upon whom they would try their power. The wind leaped out of the North and bore down upon him with all his fury, but the poor traveler only wrapped his coat the more tightly about him. Then the sun passed out from behind a cloud and smiled down upon him, until, in a few minutes, he was removing his coat and hunting for shade. It is a great lesson. God is not limited in his resources. The greatest forces are often unseen. Rattle and war do not necessarily imply power. Learn to know the "hidings of his power." His power to aid his people is unlimited.

The voice of God (v. 12). An acquaintance told me that when he crossed the ocean the passengers started in to spend the time dancing, playing cards and drinking. In a day or so, a terrific storm came up and even the captain seemed to lose hope. The people, almost to a man, gave themselves up to prayer. But when the storm subsided, the cards were brought out and the dancing and hilarity were renewed with more abandon than ever. Fear rode on the wings of the storm, but it was not the voice of God which convicts of sin and produces genuine contrition of soul. The people of Naples and adjacent cities, who have the smoke of Vesuvius floating over them continually, are among the most godless people in the world. It is not environment or external manifestations that produce lasting reformations in heart and life, but God's voice. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword" (Heb. 4:12). God speaks by his Spirit to all. The most reckless, as well as the most upright, are blessed with the voice of God speaking to them. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The Lord is always caring for his children.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

ELIJAH { AT PRAYER / DISCOURAGED / ENCOURAGED

Preliminary. Spend a very few minutes in rapid questioning upon the scene on Mount Carmel when the test was made between the true religion and the false. In the higher primary grades it might be well to mention the destruction of the prophets of Baal, giving God's commands as recorded in Deut. 17:2-7. There is opportunity in this lesson for three interesting stories,—one, the prayer for rain, another, the flight to the wilderness, and the third, the scene at Horeb.

Elijah's prayer for rain. Describe the appearance of the fields, the roads and the watercourses in that land after the prolonged drought of three and one half years. The children will remember how dry, parched and dusty the ground was last summer when no rain had fallen for a few weeks. Tell again why the drought was sent. On Mount Carmel Ahab was feasting. Elijah was praying and Elijah's servant was watching for signs of rain. Elijah had prayed just before this and fire fell, and now he was praying for water to fall. Describe the little cloud rising over the sea, its rapid increase in size and the bursting storm, and the swift journey of the prophet to Jezreel. Ahab ought to have believed that the God who sent fire and rain as Elijah prayed was the true God.

Elijah cast down. Ask the children what there was for Ahab to tell Jezebel about that had taken place that day at Carmel, and what reason she had for being angry at Elijah. Tell them that the prophet thought, after the test to prove who was the true God, the king and queen and all the people would give up the worship of Baal, but he was greatly disappointed. Picture Elijah's long flight to Beer-sheba and a day's journey alone into the wilderness to save his life. Use a map to make his course clear.

Elijah encouraged. Note the prophet's prayer under the juniper tree in contrast to his prayers at Carmel. This prayer was not one of submission and trust. Tell his need of encouragement and how his hunger was satisfied. Ask the class to recall how he had been miraculously fed before. Elijah went in the strength of this food forty days. Mention Moses' two fasts and Christ's fast of the same length of time. The wind, the earthquake and the fire should be described, and explained as being sent by the Lord to show him God's great power. He might have spoken to the prophet out of the wind, the earthquake or the fire, but he chose to speak in the still, small voice that caused him to wrap his face reverently in his mantle. Elijah was given other work to do. God entrusted important duties to him. He will give us work to do. Tell how lonely the prophet felt because he thought he was the only one left who was true to God, and how greatly the Lord encouraged him by telling him there were seven thousand more in Israel who did not believe in Baal.

LESSON XII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Sept. 13.—Defeat through drunkenness.—1 Kings 20: 10-21. Tu.—Helpless through wrong-doing.—Isa. 2: 5-22. Wed.—Revelry with wine.—Amos 6: 1-8. Th.—Greed and drunkenness.—Isa. 5: 11-24. Fr.—Sobriety and watchfulness.—1 Peter 4: 1-11. Sat.—Not eating and drinking.—Rom. 14: 13-23. Su.—Mutual helpfulness.—1 Cor. 13: 1-13.

Defeat through Drunkenness—Temperance Lesson.—1 Kings 20: 1-21. Print 20: 10-21.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 11, 12)

SUPT.—10 And Ben-ha'dad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Sa-mar'i-a shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.

School.—11 And the king of Is'ra-el answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.

12 And it came to pass, when Ben-ha'dad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array. And they set themselves in array against the city.

13 And, behold, there came a prophet unto A'hab king of Is'ra-el, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.

14 And A'hab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the Lord, Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou.

15 Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Is'ra-el, being seven thousand.

16 And they went out at noon. But Ben-ha'dad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him.

17 And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-ha'dad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Sa-mar'i-a.

18 And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive.

19 So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them.

20 And they slew every one his man: and the Syr'i-ans fled; and Is'ra-el pursued them: and Ben-ha'dad the king of Syr'i-a escaped on an horse with the horsemen.

21 And the king of Is'ra-el went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syr'i-ans with a great slaughter.

*AMERICAN REVISION

10 And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me. 11 And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off. 12 And it came to pass, when Ben-hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings, in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array. And they set themselves in array against the city.

13 And, behold, a prophet came near unto Ahab king of Israel, and said, Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thy hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah. 14 And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith Jehovah, By the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall begin the battle? And he answered, Thou. 15 Then he mustered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty-two: and after them he mustered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand.

16 And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. 17 And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out from Samaria. 18 And he said, Whether they are come out for peace, take them alive: or whether they are come out for war, take them alive. 19 So these went out of the city, the young men of the princes of the provinces, and the army which followed them. 20 And they slew every one his man; and the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with horsemen. 21 And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Wine and new wine take away the heart. Hosea 4: 11.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**Strong drink is the cause of unnumbered ruined fortunes, homes, bodies, minds and souls.**

TOPIC.—**The God of nations.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Benhadad's demands. II. Israel's defiance. III. A drunken army. IV. Israel's victory.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 900.**

PLACE.—**Samaria.**

INTRODUCTION.—The incidents which we study to-day form a powerful temperance lesson. The ruinous effects of liquor-drinking are clearly illustrated. In all ages the results of dissipation are the same. Benhadad's army has been compared to the enemy of mankind, the liquor traffic, and his demands upon Israel to the demands of strong drink upon the race.

COMMENTARY.—I. BENHADAD'S DEMANDS (vs. 1-9). As a result of the idolatry of Ahab and Jezebel and their persistent disregard of the law of God, not only did the nation become idolatrous and weak, but the heathen nation to the north, Syria, made inroads into Israel under Benhadad II. Benhadad I had wrested from Baasha certain cities of the northern part of Israel, and had even gained possession of certain streets in Samaria, Israel's capital (1 Kings 20: 34). The Benhadad of the present lesson had made Israel tributary to himself, and to his haughty demands the weak and wicked Ahab was inclined to yield. The king of Syria had said to Ahab, "Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine" (1 Kings 20: 3), and Ahab assented to his demand; but Benhadad was not satisfied with that and sent word to Ahab that he would send his servants to search the houses of the king and

his people and would carry away whatever of value they should desire. This demand was a little too arrogant for even the weak and cowardly Ahab to accept, and after counseling with his officers he sent word to Benhadad that he had accepted his first demands, but would not yield to the last.

II. ISRAEL'S DEFIANCE (vs. 10-15). **10. Benhadad**—The king of Syria, who reigned about thirty years and died B. C. 890. This was Benhadad II, son of Benhadad I. There was also a king of Syria known as Benhadad III, not a son of Benhadad II, but of Hazael. **the gods do so unto me, and more also**—A strong form of oath or affirmation. **suffice for handfuls**—Benhadad declared that if each of his soldiers should take a single handful of earth, the entire city of Samaria would be carried away. This boast indicates his vanity, yet it shows that his army was large. **11. the king of Israel answered**—The apt proverbial expression which follows was a fitting answer to Benhadad's boast. **12. heard this message**—The message mentioned in verse 11, in which Ahab intimated that the battle had not yet been fought. The Roman proverb says, "Sing not the triumphal song before the victory." In the Christian warfare, however, it is entirely appropriate to sing the song of triumph before the battle. **as he was drinking**—The Syrian king and his fellow kings were apparently unaware of any danger and were careless in their fancied security. Benhadad knew that Ahab's refusal to accede to all his demands would be likely to make him trouble, but he also knew the weakness of Israel in contrast to his great resources, and gave himself over to revelry. **pavilions**—These were tents made of skins, cloth or the boughs of trees.

13. there came a prophet unto Ahab—The name is not given. Whedon suggests that he was from one of the schools of the prophets, while Clarke thinks it might possibly have been either Elijah or Elisha in disguise. The latter view is unlikely, for there appears to be no reason why the identity of either of these should be concealed. **hast thou seen**—Surely Ahab had seen the vast army of Syria and had been so terrified that he had consented to give himself, his family and his wealth to Benhadad that his life might be preserved. **I will deliver**—Over against the "great multitude" of the enemy was placed the promise of Jehovah. **this day**—No greater good could well come to the besieged city. **thou shalt know that I am the Lord**—One more effort was to be made in mercy to bring Ahab to realize his wickedness in trusting in heathen deities and rejecting the God of Israel. **14. by whom**—Ahab could see no way in which such a marvelous deliverance could be effected. His own forces were small and he expected no allies to come to his assistance. **the young men of the princes**—These young men were the attendants of the chief officers of the different districts of the kingdom of Israel, and were in Samaria because of Benhadad's invasion. **who shall order the battle**—For the time Ahab was apparently desirous of receiving help and direction from God. With an insignificant army, he thought there must be an extraordinary leader to insure success. **thou**—Surely Ahab must have been humbled, in view of his past wickedness, to think that such a great commission should be entrusted to him. "Jehovah will show Ahab, and also Benhadad, that 'the battle is not to the strong,' and these two hundred thirty-two youths shall be mightier than the boasted numbers of the king of Syria."—*Whedon.* **15. seven thousand**—This must have represented the total number of men in Samaria available for military duty.

III. A DRUNKEN ARMY (vs. 16-18). **16. they went**—The two hundred thirty-two young men of the princes. It looked as if they were marching to their death as this handful of men went to face the Syrian host. **but**—A strong adversative. On the one side was the little band going forth under divine direction, and on the other a group of kings in command of immense forces in a drunken carousal. **drinking himself drunk**—For kings to drink and for army officers to be drunken at any time, and especially on the eve of battle, is the height of folly. Alcohol is a conqueror. It conquers the general, the statesman, the professional man, the laborer, the business man, the man of wealth, the man in poverty, the man of intellectual power, the high, the low, the great, the small, all, it conquers all who tarry with it. In one of the countries of Europe, before an army undertakes a long march, or engages in battle, officers pass along the lines to examine the soldiers, and if the smell of liquor is found upon the breath of any man, he is sent back to the barracks as unfit for the service to be undertaken. One may become intoxicated and become sober again, but an injury has been done to the tissues of the brain and to other organs of the body from which he will never fully recover. **the kings, the thirty and two**—They were petty kings, who were tributary to Benhadad.

17. went out first—They went out of Samaria toward the Syrian camp, leading the way for the seven thousand who were to follow. **Ben-hadad sent out**—To learn the cause of the sally from the besieged city. **18. take them alive**—In the folly of his drunken insolence he was confident of victory, not dreaming of any power greater than his own.—*Whedon.*

IV. ISRAEL'S VICTORY (vs. 19-21). **19. these young men....and the army**—The young men were to be the agents in turning the Syrian army to flight and the seven thousand were to pursue the fleeing host. **20. they slew every one his man**—Not only was Benhadad's army unprepared for an attack, but the leaders were drunk, while the young men were fully alive to the work before them and had a definite purpose, which they accomplished. **the Syrians fled**—An organized, systematic attack upon the leaderless Syrian multitude, panic-stricken by the unexpected assault, caused them to flee. **Israel pursued**—The narration is vivid. There is a striking array of facts packed into this verse. On Israel's side was order, on Syria's disorder; on Israel's courage and faith, on Syria's dismay; on Israel's victory, on Syria's inglorious defeat. **Benhadad escaped**—The king's body-guard doubtless made unusual efforts to save the life of their master. **21. the king of Israel went**—The marvelous deliverance inspired him with energy to make the victory as great as possible. **a great slaughter**—The word of the Lord by his prophet had been fulfilled, and it was with the express purpose that the king might recognize God's power, but he did not acknowledge him.

QUESTIONS.—Who was the king of Israel at this time? The king of Syria? What was the relation between the two nations? What demand did the king of Syria make upon the king of Israel? Who appeared to encourage Ahab? What was the strength of Israel's army as compared with that of Syria? Describe the battle and the victory. What wickedness and folly were in the Syrian camp? How did drunkenness affect the outcome of the battle?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The events as they occur in their regular order furnish an excellent temperance lesson. 2. The evils of the use of strong drink frequently mentioned in the scriptures. 3. Strong drink is an enemy to human progress. 4. It is as disastrous for kings to drink as for their subjects. 5. A long line of sins and calamities follows in the train of strong drink.

II. THEME.—Folly and disaster in strong drink.

III. BENHADAD'S AMBITION.—1. He already had power and standing among rulers. 2. The location, extent and wealth of his dominions. 3. His ambition for greater territory led him to seek it by conquest. 4. He regarded Ahab and the kingdom of Israel as his possession. 5. The army of Syria was encamped before Samaria. 6. The arrogant demands of Benhadad. 7. The thirst for power is conscienceless and unreasonable. 8. Ahab's refusal to submit to Benhadad's excessive demands, and the latter's boast.

IV. BENHADAD'S FOLLY.—1. Verses 12 and 16 declare the nature of the Syrian king's folly. 2. With him the folly lay (1) in the injury that a course of drunkenness would bring to him personally and (2) in the loss to his army and nation. 3. The foolish orders sent forth as stated in verses 12 and 18. 4. Strong drink had made him short-sighted and overconfident. 5. The deceptiveness of intoxicating liquors.

V. BENHADAD'S DEFEAT.—1. Two enemies helped to defeat Benhadad. (1) Strong drink. (2) The army of Israel. 2. The divine element in his defeat. (1) The prophet's message. (2) The Lord's promise. 3. God's purpose in the destruction of the Syrian army. 4. Ways in which strong drink brings defeat. (1) It defeats happiness in the home. (2) It tends to defeat peace and prosperity in the community. (3) It tends to defeat the objects of the Christian church.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**The God of nations.**

I. Punished oppression and tyranny.
II. Vindicated his sovereign power.

I. Punished oppression and tyranny. God's plan with nations and with oppressive and tyrannical kings is brought out in this lesson. The human heart, insolent and timorous by turns, is portrayed in the two kings, Benhadad and Ahab. The teaching is clear that neither people nor rulers can forget God with impunity. God's goodness to the froward is shown by his bringing them into circumstances where they may prove and know him. The purpose of the entire battle was specified in the words of the prophet to Ahab, "Thou shalt know that I am the Lord." Benhadad's sin consisted in defiance of God, in wanton insolence and cruelty, in pride and drunkenness. His haughtiness was revealed in his messages. His aim was to wound Ahab at his tenderest point and to humble him. His language was studiously framed to wound. Pride and cruelty had dictated the assembling of such an array merely to crush a neighbor kingdom. It was an attempt to hold Ahab as a vassal, so that he should retain his possessions only by the sufferance and generosity of his superior, as the thirty-two kings, who with their subjects and fortunes, appear to have been at his service. Benhadad had no mercy, while Ahab had neither strength nor dignity. In the presence of the force arrayed against him, Ahab made every possible concession. He adopted the most subservient manner. Ahab's cowardly submission to Benhadad's terms made that boasting king more audacious and insolent in his demands. He presumed, because he had the power, he also had the right, to rob and appropriate Israel's wealth to himself. He concluded that Ahab was one upon whom he might trample at will. His servility encouraged him to renew his demands in a still more galling and vexatious form. It was presumptuous for Benhadad to celebrate a victory in word before he had gained it in deed. He found that boasting and beginning were not the whole of war.

II. Vindicated his sovereign power. Ahab king of Israel, had turned from the living God. He sought to help himself by cowardly submission to the king of Syria. He took it for granted that everything was lost when he received repeated messages from Benhadad. He was the same weak, faithless man, devoid of sterling character. It was only when the leaders of the nation cried out, that he assumed a different attitude. In his darkest hour, when other refuge failed him, Ahab found a prophet of the Lord at his side to comfort him with the promise of deliverance and triumph. God, through his prophet ordered the battle, appointed the general, disposed the attack and secured the victory. The army of seven thousand Israelites could never without supernatural aid, have overcome the hosts of Syria. That very small army did not betoken a very glorious condition of the strength of the kingdom under Ahab's rule, yet the attack was made by Israel. At that crisis God was "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." His glory was manifested most in his mercy. Ahab deserved nothing as little as he did that victory. The hand of the Lord was clearly revealed. Faith in Israel was called forth. Zeal for God's cause was encouraged. That gracious help in the time of extremity was primarily designed as a proof of Jehovah's power over the gods of Syria, and to lead Israel out of idolatry to serve their God. The agency by which the victory was won was notably feeble, that the work might be seen to be of God. A little band of God's chosen men accomplished more than the great troops which fought in a bad cause. God was heaping coals of fire upon Ahab's head. He was a helpless debtor to that God whose altars he had suffered to be overthrown, to that prophet whose companions he had slain. He had made no appeal either to the prophet or to God for help. His heart was unmoved. Benhadad's drunkenness involved the demoralization of his soldiery. It was a pitiful end of a campaign that was begun with so much boasting. Punishment came to Syria through this defeat.

T. B. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The modern Benhadad, with his insolence, avaricious demands, brutal cruelty and destructive power is King Alcohol. Instead of thirty-two, he has a whole army of allies, such as saloons, distilleries, breweries, hotels, clubs, social vice, narcotics and the protecting hand of civil and national government. But the prophetic voice is speaking and the downfall of this arrogant king is certain. This prophetic voice can be recognized in,

Science. Science says, "Alcohol is a poison for protoplasm, that is, for the soft plastic material which is the essential constituent of every one of the minute cells that make up living organisms, whether animal or vegetable. Large numbers of psychometric experiments under conditions of the greatest accuracy prove that alcohol in small dietetic doses exercises a distinctly paralyzing effect on the working of the brain." Careful nerve and vitality tests now prove that a single cigarette reduces vital efficiency ten per cent. It is this efficiency standard in which science is interested. In a recent test of candidates for a certain government position four fifths were rejected as being physically unfit through alcoholism and other narcotics. Col. Maus, of the U. S. Army, recently wrote an article appearing in the Medical Record in which he said, "There remains no longer any doubt regarding the ruinous effects of alcohol on the human race, and it becomes not only the duty of the state, but of every intelligent man and woman to join in the crusade against the common enemy. It is the constant, habitual, moderate, 'social' drinking which is the deadly and destructive thing, because it is always at work, lowering the fighting power of the white blood corpuscles, and thus taking away from the race half its power of defense."

Sentiment. The young men of the land (v. 14) in their prohibition leagues and study classes on the liquor problem, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union with all of its allied branches, the constant appeals of the leaders of the temperance forces during the last fifty years, the thought-producing work of the prohibition party, the agitation in legislative halls, both state and national, in connection with proposed legislation,—all of these, and many more effective agencies, have been fruitful in creating a hostile sentiment against the liquor traffic. This sentiment is indicated by the increasing extent of territory coming under local option, by the firm stand against drinking taken by the leading corporations of the country, and by the greater publicity being given to the subject by the press of the country. A recent editorial in The Minneapolis Journal says, "It would seem just now that about all the world is drifting pretty steadily in the direction of total abstinence. Whether general prohibition comes or not, the feeling against alcohol is bound to grow stronger." The work of agitation has not been in vain. Temperance reformers have been ridiculed and abused, and some have suffered martyrdom, but their work is producing results.

Scripture. "Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!" (Isa. 5:22, 23). "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also." G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—Drunkenness brings ruin.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Victory through { Courage / God's help

Defeat through { Drunkenness / Pride

A beginning. The children and young people of our land must be depended on very largely to bring about the great result we are aiming at in the temperance work, which is to make the nation dry. If the children can be shown the evils of drink so thoroughly that they will never taste it, the next generation will be sober. On the board draw the outline of a bottle. Let the class tell you as many evils as they can that follow the use of alcoholic drinks, and write them in a circle around the bottle. Look up two or three scripture texts that teach the evils of intemperance. Tell the story of the young man Daniel who would not drink the wine that the king wished him to have.

The Lord gave victory. Have a map of Palestine and Syria and show the class the relative position of Damascus and Samaria. It would be better to draw an outline map on the board before the class and point out the places, showing how far the Syrians had to march to reach Samaria. Picture the immense army of Benhadad as they were encamped before Samaria. Explain the demands that the Syrian king made upon Ahab and the willingness of the latter to meet them and to consider himself, his people and his gold and silver the property of the king of Syria. Explain the further demands of the king and Ahab's refusal to fulfil them. Represent Ahab's little army of seven thousand by a line one half inch long, and Benhadad's army by a line ten inches long. Dwell upon the fact that just at the time when Israel's need was the greatest the Lord sent a prophet to Ahab, the king, to encourage him by promising victory over the vast Syrian army. The Lord will always come to us when we need him, if we ask him. Ahab was to be shown again that there was a God in Israel. Give a vivid word picture of the two hundred thirty-two young men starting out of the city followed by the seven thousand to attack the hosts of Benhadad, and show the great Syrian army turning to flee at the first assault made by the young men. Through their courage and the help of the Lord they won a great victory that day.

Drunkenness brought defeat. Draw a contrast between what was being done in the two armies before the battle. In Samaria the prophet of the Lord was assuring the king of Israel of victory and the people were believing God's word. In the camp of the Syrian army Benhadad and the thirty-two kings under him were drinking until they were intoxicated, thinking there was no danger, or recklessly putting themselves in such a condition that they could do little in battle. Show the folly of the king's command to capture the two hundred thirty-two young men and make them prisoners whether they were coming in peace or not. The Syrian army had unfitted themselves to use common sense as well as to resist the enemy.

LESSON XIII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Sept. 20.—Absalom's failure.—2 Sam. 18: 1-15. Tu.—Solomon chooses wisdom.—1 Kings 3: 4-15. Wed.—The kingdom torn asunder.—1 Kings 12: 6-16. Th.—Jeroboam leads Israel into sin.—1 Kings 12: 25-33. Fr.—God's care of Elijah.—1 Kings 17: 1-16. Sat.—Elijah's flight and return.—1 Kings 19: 8-18. Su.—Obedience and kingship.—Psa. 72.

Obedience and Kingship—Review.—Psalm 72: 1-20.

[A reading lesson only.]

SUPT.—1 Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

School.—2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

3 The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.

4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.

6 He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.

7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

10 The kings of Tar'shish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of She'ba and Se'ba shall offer gifts.

11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of She'ba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.

16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Leb'a-non; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

18 Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Is'ra-el, who only doeth wondrous things.

19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; A'men, and A'men.

20 The prayers of Da'vid the son of Jes'se are ended.

SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—The king shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Psa. 21: 1.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord takes an interest in the affairs of nations.**

TOPIC.—**National history.**

INTRODUCTION.—The events which we have studied during this quarter are included in about a century and quarter of Israel's history. We have seen the close of David's powerful reign, and also have noted the brilliant reign of Solomon. We have seen the kingdom rent asunder, and the two new kingdoms at war with each other. We have seen a succession of kings, good and bad, upon the throne of Judah, and a succession of wicked kings upon the throne of Israel. The Lord did not leave his people without warning, but sent faithful prophets to point them toward the right way.

SUMMARY.—Lesson I. Topic: Rebellion by intrigue. Place: Mahanaim, east of the Jordan. Absalom was the third son of David and was ambitious to become king of Judah. His older brothers were dead and he undertook to win the favor of the people, that he might drive his father out and take the throne. David fled from Jerusalem and after a while Absalom came out with a large army to defeat his father. His army was defeated and he was slain.

II. Topic: King David's proclamation. Place: Jerusalem. While David was still alive another of his sons, Adonijah, attempted to take the throne. He called the people together with the expectation of being crowned. David heard of it and called an assembly and appointed Solomon king. David gave Solomon the advice to obey the Lord fully, for God had promised to continue his descendants on the throne if they would obey him.

III. Topic: A prayer for wisdom. Places: Gibeon; Jerusalem. Solomon made a sacrifice to the Lord at Gibeon. The Lord appeared to him there in a dream, and asked him what he should give him. Solomon asked that he might have wisdom to rule his people. The Lord was pleased with his choice and gave him wisdom, also riches and honor, and the promise of long life if he would obey him.

IV. Topic: The temple dedicated. Place: Jerusalem. David had made large preparations for building the house of the Lord, and Solomon carried out the plan fully. It took seven years to complete the temple. At the time appointed for the dedication of the house of the Lord the ark of the covenant was put in the most holy place of the temple. The glory of the Lord filled the temple.

V. Topic: Solomon's queenly visitor. Places: Sheba; Jerusalem. The fame of Solomon as the wise and rich king of Israel spread far and wide. The queen of Sheba went from the south of Arabia to see Solomon and to learn about his wisdom and greatness. She took large presents to him. When she had seen his splendor and heard his wisdom, she said that not half had been told her.

VI. Topic: The result of sin. Place: Shechem. Rehoboam, Solomon's son, expected the people to make him king at Shechem. The ten northern tribes said they would accept him if he would make their burdens lighter than those put on them by Solomon. Following the advice of the young men he refused and they revolted and made Jeroboam, a former servant of Saul's, their king.

VII. Topic: Jeroboam's policy. Places: Shechem; Bethel; Dan. Jeroboam feared that if the ten tribes continued to go to Jerusalem to worship the Lord, they would return to the kingdom from which they had separated; therefore he set up images of calves at Bethel and Dan to

represent God, and made those places centers for worship, thus plunging the nation into idolatry.

VIII. Topic: Reformation in Judah. Place: Jerusalem. The Lord sent a message of encouragement to Asa, the king of Judah, by Azariah. He undertook to destroy idolatry and he restored the great altar of sacrifice. He called an assembly of the people and they entered into a solemn covenant to seek the Lord and obey him.

IX. Topic: Divine sovereignty vindicated. Places: Samaria; Cherith; Zarephath. Elijah, the Lord's prophet, suddenly appeared to Ahab and announced that there would be an extended drought in Israel. Ahab wished to kill Elijah, but the Lord miraculously cared for him at the brook Cherith, and later at Zarephath.

X. Topic: The claims of Deity. Place: Mount Carmel. At the end of three and a half years the Lord told Elijah to go to Ahab. He went, and he told Ahab to gather the prophets of Baal at Carmel. There would be a test to show who was the true God. The followers of Baal tried in vain to call fire from heaven to consume their sacrifice. God answered Elijah's prayer.

XI. Topic: God's gifts to Elijah. Places: Jezreel; Beer-sheba; Horeb. Jezebel was enraged at Elijah because of his opposition to Baal and threatened to kill him. The prophet fled to Beer-sheba and then to Horeb, where the Lord talked with him and sent him to anoint Hazael king of Syria, Jehu king of Israel, and to anoint Elisha his own successor.

XII. Topic: The God of nations. Place: Samaria. Benhadad was king of Syria. He besieged Samaria and demanded that Ahab give up everything to him. Ahab refused and the Lord sent a prophet to declare that Benhadad would be defeated. Benhadad and his men became drunken and the small army of Israel defeated them.

TABULAR VIEW

NO.	SUBJECTS	GOLDEN TEXTS	PRACTICAL TRUTHS	OUTLINES
I.	Absalom's Failure. 2 Sam. 18: 1-15.	Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Eph. 6: 1.	Disrespect for parents leads to still greater sins.	I. David's tenderness toward Absalom. II. The battle in the forest. III. Absalom is slain.
II.	Solomon Anointed King. 1 Kings 1: 1-2: 12.	Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind. 1 Chron. 28: 9.	True prosperity comes to those who fully follow the Lord.	I. Adonijah's attempt to become king. II. His plans frustrated. III. Solomon made king. IV. David's charge.
III.	Solomon Chooses Wisdom. 1 Kings 3: 4-15.	The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Prov. 9: 10.	The Lord gives true wisdom to those who earnestly ask him for it.	I. Solomon's sacrifice. II. The Lord's offer. III. Solomon's choice. IV. Gifts bestowed.
IV.	Solomon Dedicates the Temple. 1 Kings 8: 1-53.	Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. Isa. 56: 7.	God dwells among his people.	I. Bringing in the ark. II. Blessing the people. III. Solomon's prayer.
V.	The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon. 1 Kings 10: 1-10, 13.	Wisdom is better than rubies. Prov. 8: 11.	The Lord alone bestows true wisdom.	I. The fame of Solomon. II. The queen's wonder. III. Her acknowledgment. IV. Gifts exchanged.
VI.	The Kingdom Torn Asunder. 1 Kings 12: 1-24.	Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Prov. 16: 18.	Pride often closes the ears to wise counsel.	I. Israel's plea. II. Rehoboam taking counsel. III. Rehoboam's answer. IV. The revolt.
VII.	Jeroboam Leads Israel into Sin. 1 Kings 12: 25-33.	Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. Exod. 20: 4, 5.	True religion goes out when worldly ambition comes in.	I. Jeroboam's fear. II. Idolatry introduced. III. God's laws broken.
VIII.	Asa's Good Reign. 2 Chron. 15: 1-15.	Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. James 4: 8.	One person who is true to God can accomplish great things.	I. The message to Asa. II. Asa encouraged. III. A great assembly. IV. A solemn covenant.
IX.	God's Care of Elijah. 1 Kings 17: 1-16.	Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. 1 Peter 5: 7.	God sustains and protects his servants.	I. Elijah, God's messenger to Ahab. II. Hiding at Cherith. III. Sustained at Zarephath.
X.	Elijah and the Prophets of Baal. 1 Kings 18: 16-40.	The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous. Prov. 15: 29.	The Lord never fails those who trust him.	I. Elijah meets Ahab. II. A test proposed. III. Baal proved powerless. IV. The answer by fire.
XI.	Elijah's Flight and Return. 1 Kings 19: 1-21.	Be still, and know that I am God. Psa. 46: 10.	The Lord gives strength and courage to his children.	I. Elijah fleeing from Jezebel. II. Miraculously fed. III. At Horeb. IV. Calls Elisha.
XII.	Defeat through Drunkenness — Temperance Lesson. 1 Kings 20: 1-21.	Wine and new wine take away the heart. Hosea 4: 11.	Strong drink is the cause of unnumbered ruined fortunes, homes, bodies, minds and souls.	I. Benhadad's demands. II. Israel's defiance. III. A drunken army. IV. Israel's victory.

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The time covered by the events studied during the quarter. 2. The greatest event studied during the quarter. 3. God's forbearance toward Israel. 4. The enlightenment of the people spiritually compared with that of civilized nations to-day.

II. THEME.—God's regard for human actions.

III. THE UNITED KINGDOM.—1. The kingdom was united under David. 2. David's distress over Absalom's attempt to take the kingdom from him. 3. David's victory and lamentation over Absalom. 4. Adonijah's unkindness toward David. 5. Solomon was a talented ruler. (1) He was made king by David's appointment and the people's acceptance. (2) His choice of wisdom. (3) The temple built and dedicated. (4) The visit of the queen of Sheba and her impression of Israel's greatness. (5) Solomon's weaknesses. (a) Foreign wives. (b) Idolatry.

IV. THE DISRUPTED KINGDOM.—1. Rehoboam's opportunity. 2. A disaffected people. 3. The advice given Rehoboam, and the kind accepted. 4. Rehoboam's answer to the people's reasonable request. 5. Jeroboam's ability. 6. His readiness to be the leader of the seceding tribes. 7. Jeroboam's introduction of idolatry. 8. He "made Israel to sin."

V. THE LORD'S PROPHETS.—1. The prophet Azariah brought an encouraging message to Asa. 2. The appearance of Elijah to Ahab. 3. The punishment of Israel for idolatry. 4. Elijah's miraculous preservation. 5. The victory of Elijah on Mount Carmel. 6. Elijah's journey to Horeb and the commission he there received. 7. The prophet who encouraged Ahab to resist Benhadad and the result.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**National history.**

I. Intrigue.
II. Intercession.
III. Inconstancy.
IV. Intervention.

I. Intrigue. Along with the kingly character and conduct of David we trace the chastening hand of the Lord, even down to his last days. The one dark sin of his life forever cast its shadow over his family. The bitter anguish that filled his soul when Absalom stole away the hearts of the people and openly attempted to usurp the throne, did not come from the possible humiliation of losing the kingdom, but from the consciousness that his own sin had brought such sorrow upon his family as to result in the rebellion of a beloved son against his sorrowful and ever-penitent father. A second time he met disloyalty and intrigue when his son Adonijah attempted to make himself king regardless of the Lord's promise that Solomon should succeed his father. If David and Bathsheba regarded that promise as God's assurance to them of their complete forgiveness, an attempt to thwart that design could only remind them anew of their folly. The unfaltering trust which upheld David in his declining years enabled him to meet each trial as it came and so to deal with his wayward sons as to prove his parental love and concern and yet to observe strictly all the will of God in behalf of the kingdom over which he ruled. Because of his loyalty God suffered no attempt of intrigue to prosper.

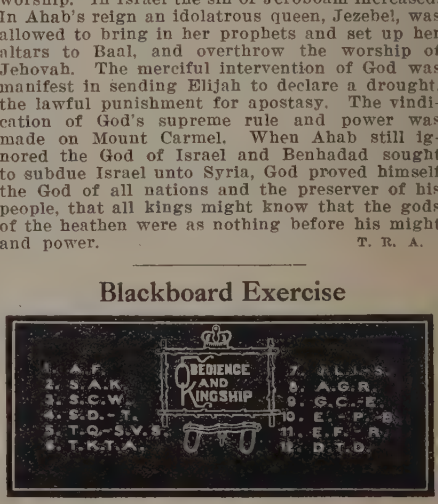
II. Intercession. The memory of David's life and character, together with his last counsel, made Solomon conscious of the great responsibility which came upon him with his accession to the throne of Israel. His early training, his knowledge of the affairs of the kingdom and his sincere devotion to God, enabled him to carry out the plans which seemed marked out for him. The loving-kindness of God is strongly portrayed in the night counsel which he held with Solomon, whose heart was then tender and devout and most suited to choose what was best for his own equipment and the welfare of the nation over which he was to rule. His spirit of intercession in behalf of others continued and was manifest in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, where he embraced all men in his prayer for atonement for sin. That his gift of wisdom was used to bless those who sought his counsel is seen in his interview with the queen of Sheba, to whom was made known the worship of Jehovah.

III. Inconstancy. That no man can confine the effects of sin to his own lifetime was evidenced in the state of things when Solomon's son came to succeed his father. The evils which were permitted to exist within the borders of God's chosen nation had their effect upon the rising generation. That they had weakened the character and rule of Solomon was evident in the complaints which the people offered when they were about to proclaim Rehoboam king. That Solomon's dealings with Jeroboam had not prepared the way for the best development of his character or the deepening of his religious life, comes out in his opening career as king over the ten tribes upon their revolt against the rule of Rehoboam.

IV. Intervention. Under Rehoboam the kingdom of Judah fell into grievous sin until the whole land was polluted with idols and heathen worship. The watchful eye of God marked the time of victorious warfare, which he granted to Asa, and through the prophet Azariah directed the king in a national revival which included the displacement of an idolatrous queen, the extinction of the Sodomites and the destruction of idol worship. In Israel the sin of Jeroboam increased. In Ahab's reign an idolatrous queen, Jezebel, was allowed to bring in her prophets and set up her altars to Baal, and overthrow the worship of Jehovah. The merciful intervention of God was manifest in sending Elijah to declare a drought, the lawful punishment for apostasy. The vindication of God's supreme rule and power was made on Mount Carmel. When Ahab still ignored the God of Israel and Benhadad sought to subdue Israel unto Syria, God proved himself the God of all nations and the preserver of his people, that all kings might know that the gods of the heathen were as nothing before his might and power.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The kingdom of Judah. "Heathenism pressed ever closer. Its rigid exclusion, however essential, was in the end impossible. Contact with idolatrous nations, the presence of an active pro-heathen party, dating from the fatal error of Solomon, the influence, too often, of a pro-heathen king and court, the tendency of baser natures to turn to any sensuous worship, beat back the ancient faith from its old supremacy, and slowly sapped its vigor. The increasing influence of Assyria and Babylon, as time passed on, strengthened this heathen element, till it became dominant. Alliances with idolatrous empires, and imitation of their example, at once threw the ancient faith into the shade, and showed in the decay of national worth their appropriate fruits. Even what orthodoxy survived was blighted. Under a cold and worldly priesthood favored by the court, a superstitious ceremonial and dead ecclesiasticism gradually threw the people into spiritual sleep, in spite of the watchful and earnest care of the prophets and of the remnant of noble souls."

The kingdom of Israel. "Soon after its erection the kingdom received a heavy blow in the withdrawal of the priests and Levites to Jerusalem. To them in great measure was confined the education and refinement of the community. They were the representatives of art, law, religion, and general knowledge. The institution of the calf worship of Bethel and Dan, instead of the homage to the Unseen which obtained in Jerusalem, was a fatal error, induced partly by jealousy of the South, partly by unworthy concession to the popular tastes. The nation not only lost the elevating and strengthening influences of a spiritual faith, but was henceforth unable to resist the advance of heathenism, far less to overcome it. Having sanctioned it in a measure, nothing could prevent it flooding in ever more strongly from Phenicia and Syria, with which the whole country was in the closest intercourse, through commerce and otherwise. The confusion of the old days of the Judges returned in a great degree by constant political revolutions; popular ignorance and superstition grew apace where all was unsettled; idolatry gradually took root, and with it an immorality fatal to any people."

Application. Obedience and kingship stand over against disobedience and slavery. Disobedience to God and neglect of the laws of righteousness spell the ruin of nations as well as men. The great nations of the past collapsed in form after they had died at heart. Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome are silent proofs of the truth that "the soul [or nation] that sinneth, it shall die." The divided kingdoms stand in history as an object lesson to the nations of to-day, of the withering punishment that follows national sin. The occasional appearance of a righteous character only accentuates the dark outlines of the photograph of sin presented by the majority. In Malory's Morte d' Arthur there is the legend of the Sword of Assay. In the church against the high altar was a great stone, four-square, like a marble block. In the midst of it was an anvil of steel, a foot high, and therein stood a naked sword by the point. About the sword there were letters written, saying, "Whoso pulleth out this sword of this stone and anvil, is righteous king of England." The test of kingship for nations and men is to be able to pull out the sword of sin. By this test alone is royalty known. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The Lord prospers those who obey him.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Kings { David, I
Solomon, II, III, IV, V
Rehoboam, VI
Jeroboam, VII
Asa, VIII

The prophet Elijah, IX, X, XI

Drunkenness and defeat, XII

The stories. The lessons of the quarter furnish an abundance of material for stories to fill the class hour. The sin of disobedience is powerfully set forth and the excellence of faith and obedience is emphasized. It might be well to assign different stories beforehand to older primary children, so that they can give them on review Sunday.

Kings. We have studied the acts of many kings during the quarter. Recall some of the events in the life of David before Absalom undertook to take the kingdom from him. In telling the story of Absalom note the fact of his dishonoring his father and thus breaking the fifth commandment. One sin prepares the way for another. Absalom met his death through his rebellion against his father. Tell the story of Solomon's being made king while his father yet lived. The choice that Solomon made is worthy of emphasis. People choose inferior things when they might choose the best. Make reference to the attention that David and Solomon gave to the building of the Lord's house. Describe the dedication service. Let a child tell the story of the visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon to see his greatness and to learn about his wisdom. Note that Solomon in a large degree forgot the Lord. Show what a good opportunity Rehoboam had to be a useful king over all Israel, but he threw it away by being stubborn and haughty. Jeroboam was all ready to be the king over the ten tribes that broke away from the rest of the nation. Dwell upon the great sin of Jeroboam in setting up false worship at Bethel and Dan. Describe the good things that Asa did during his reign. He is an example of a successful reformer.

Elijah. We have three lessons about this wonderful prophet in this quarter and are to have two more in the next. The children can recall the story of Elijah's stay at Cherith where he was fed by the ravens, and the one about his long stay at the home of the widow of Zarephath. Elijah had faith in God and obeyed him. The scene on Mount Carmel can be vividly described. Tell the story of the rain that came in answer to Elijah's prayer. Describe his trip to Horeb and back.

Drunkenness and defeat. Describe the condition of things at Samaria. An immense army from Syria was threatening to destroy the city. The army of Israel was small. The Lord's prophet told Ahab, the king, that the enemy would be defeated. Note the fact that drunkenness in the Syrian army made the officers and men unfit for duty, and the army was defeated. Inquire in what several ways drunkenness causes defeat now. Those who give themselves up to strong drink are made weak.



JONAH, ISAIAH HABAKKUK

ELISHA

There is much more recorded regarding the introduction of Elisha into the prophetic office than that of Elijah. While Elijah appears suddenly and unannounced, Elisha is formally anointed by Elijah for his work. It is interesting to imagine the scene in the valley of the Jordan as Elijah was returning from Horeb after his flight from Jezreel. A son of Shaphat, named Elisha, was plowing in the field. The prophet passed by and, without uttering a word, cast his mantle upon him. We may picture the amazed look on the face of the plowman; yet there is a look of recognition, for he knows the significance of the ceremony just performed. He is to be the successor of the great prophet.

His faithfulness in following Elijah furnishes an example worthy of imitation. He would not leave his master, even though he was entreated to remain behind. His persistency gained for him a sight of Elijah as he was taken up by a whirlwind and borne to heaven. He at once took up his work with the several schools of the prophets. He was a man of different mold from Elijah. "Elisha was greater yet less, less yet greater, than Elijah. He is less. We can not dispense with the mighty past even when we have shot far beyond it. Those who follow can not be as those who went before. A prophet like Elijah comes once and does not return. Elisha, both to his countrymen and to us, is but the successor, the faint reflection of his predecessor. Less, yet greater; for the work of the great ones of this earth is carried on by far inferior instruments, but on a far wider scale, and it may be in a far higher spirit. The life of an Elijah is never spent in vain. Even his death has not taken him from us. He struggles, single-handed as it would seem, and without effect; and in the very crisis of the nation's history is suddenly and mysteriously removed. But his work continues; his mantle falls; his teaching spreads; his enemies perish. The prophet preaches and teaches, the martyr dies and passes away; but other men enter into their labors. What was begun in fire and storm, in solitude and awful visions, must be carried on through winning arts, and healing acts, and gentle words of peaceful and social intercourse; not in the desert of Horeb, or on the top of Carmel, but in the crowded thoroughfares of Samaria, in the gardens of Damascus, by the rushing waters of Jordan."

While Elijah was God's agent in the working of few miracles, many are connected with Elisha's work. His ministry was a long one, and miracle after miracle is recorded, varying from causing an ax-head to swim to raising the dead to life. We see him now, through divine cooperation, increasing the widow's oil that she may pay her debts and have something to live on, and now he is aiding the king by telling all about the movements of an invading army.

Elisha's ministry was not confined to his own people. He had a message for Benhadad, the king of Syria. The king sent to inquire whether or not he would recover from the sickness that then afflicted him. The prophet said he would die, although the illness was not fatal. His vision disclosed the plan of Hazael to take the king's life. God's power was made known to Syria through the healing of Naaman as he followed the directions given by Elisha. The capture of the Syrian army that was sent to take the prophet should have served to teach Syria that God was working for the interests of his own people.

Elisha finished an eventful and successful ministry. "At length, worn out by his public and private labors, and at the age of ninety years, during sixty of which he is supposed to have prophesied, he is called into eternity. Nor was the manner of his death inglorious; though he did not enter rest as did Elijah (2 Kings 13:14). Among his weeping attendants was Joash, king of Israel. He was probably stung with remorse for having so neglected to acknowledge his national worth; yet, though late, God does not suffer this public recognition of his aged and faithful servant to go unrequited. The spirit of prophecy again entering the dying man, he informs Joash that he should prevail against the Syrians. Even after death God would put honor upon Elisha; a dead body, having touched his bones, came to life again" (2 Kings 13:21).

LESSON I

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Sept. 27.—Elijah in Naboth's vineyard.—1 Kings 21:11-20. Tu.—Murderous greed.—1 Kings 21:1-10. Wed.—Greed condemned.—Amos 8:1-10. Th.—Woe upon greedy oppressors.—Micah 2:1-11. Fr.—A fearless prophet.—Amos 7:7-17. Sat.—A prophet's perils.—Jer. 26:8-19. Su.—Strong in Jehovah.—Jer. 1:13-19.

Elijah in Naboth's Vineyard.—1 Kings 21: 1-29. Print 21: 11-20.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 17-19)

SUPT.—11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jez'e-bel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them.

School.—12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Na'both on high among the people.

13 And there came in two men, children of Be'li-al, and sat before him: and the men of Be'li-al witnessed against him, even against Na'both, in the presence of the people, saying, Na'both did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

14 Then they sent to Jez'e-bel, saying, Na'both is stoned, and is dead.

15 And it came to pass, when Jez'e-bel heard that Na'both was stoned, and was dead, that Jez'e-bel said to A'hab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Na'both the Jez'reel-ite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Na'both is not alive, but dead.

16 And it came to pass, when A'hab heard that Na'both was dead, that A'hab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Na'both the Jez'reel-ite, to take possession of it.

17 And the word of the Lord came to E-li'jah the Tish'bite, saying,

18 Arise, go down to meet A'hab king of Is'ra-el, which is in Sa-mar'i-a: behold, he is in the vineyard of Na'both, whither he is gone down to possess it.

19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Na'both shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

20 And A'hab said to E-li'jah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.

*AMERICAN REVISION

11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who dwelt in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, according as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. 12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. 13 And the two men, the base fellows, came in and sat before him: and the base fellows bare witness against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did curse God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him to death with stones. 14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead. 15 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead. 16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

17 And the word of Jehovah came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who dwelleth in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to take possession of it. 19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith Jehovah, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. 20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Be sure your sin will find you out. Num. 32:23.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The sin of covetousness is attended by many other sins.**

TOPIC.—**A climax reached.**

OUTLINE.—**I. The plot against Naboth. II. Naboth murdered. III. Elijah's message to Ahab.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 900.**

PLACES.—**Samaria, the capital of Israel; Jezreel, one of Ahab's dwelling-places.**

INTRODUCTION.—After the Syrians were defeated by Israel, they made great preparations for another attack. Benhadad said the gods of Israel were gods of the hills, and if they should fight Israel's army in the plains, they would conquer. He collected as large an army as he had in the former battle, and went against Israel. A prophet of the Lord came to the king of Israel and assured him that the Syrian army would again be defeated. Israel's army was victorious. Ahab, the king, was compassionate toward Benhadad, the king of Syria, and spared him. Because of his leniency, contrary to the word of the Lord, the Syrians would work great injury to Israel and to the king. Syria continued to be a menace to the peace of Ahab's kingdom. Idolatry still flourished in Israel, but the deities of this false religion failed to keep the enemies of the nation from oppressing them. The only help that came to Israel was through the true God. The lesson to-day gives us a view of the wickedness and cruelty of Ahab and Jezebel. The story of Naboth's vineyard is an expression of the wretched character possessed by this pair. There is only condemnation of them for their dastardly acts. It is probable that Elijah was occupied from the time of casting his mantle upon Elisha to his appearance in Naboth's vineyard, in conducting schools of the prophets.

COMMENTARY.—I. THE PLOT AGAINST NABOTH (vs. 1-10). **1-4.** Ahab's capital was at Samaria, but he had a beautiful palace at Jezreel, in which he delighted. He lacked ground for a garden, and he greatly desired to possess a vineyard close by belonging to Naboth. There was no wrong in Ahab's wish to secure the desirable piece of property which lay close to his palace at Jezreel, provided he had no purpose of resorting to unjust means to obtain it. Naboth was justified in withholding the vineyard from Ahab, because "the permanent sale of the paternal inheritance was forbidden by law (Lev. 25:23-28; Num. 36:7-9), and it would seem like a denial of his allegiance to the true religion to sell it when the jubilee restoration was neglected in these idolatrous times." It is an unfavorable

view that we get of Ahab as we see him sulking in his bed-chamber because his wish is not granted. His conduct reminds us of that of a peevish, pampered child.

5-10. In telling his trouble to Jezebel he handed his case over to a resourceful, conscienceless, cruel woman, who would hesitate at no iniquity if only she might accomplish her end. Jezebel appeared to hurl contempt at Ahab's weakness. In her view it was unreasonable for him, a king, to hesitate to appropriate Naboth's vineyard if he wanted it. She might have said, "Is Naboth king? or are you? Cheer up, Ahab, and eat. I will get the vineyard for you." To the reproach of Israel it must be said that Jezebel was the real head of the government. She assumed royal authority, issued the murderous decree, affixed the king's seal, and Naboth was a doomed man. Ahab was no less guilty than she, for he was knowing to the transaction and was responsible for the use of his seal upon the document that meant Naboth's death. Jezebel may be appropriately classed with Herodias, who caused the death of John the Baptist.

II. NABOTH MURDERED (vs. 11-16). **11. his city**—Jezreel, about twenty miles north of Samaria. The king and queen were at the latter city. **elders....nobles**—Those in authority in the city. The elders were the representatives of the tribes dwelling in Jezreel. The nobles were leading men, socially, in the city. **did as Jezebel had sent unto them**—The letter came to the elders and nobles bearing the royal authority since the king's seal was affixed. "In giving validity to documents, names were not in those days, nor are they now in the East, signed by the hand in writing, but impressed by a seal on which the name is engraved. Hence the importance which is attached to the signet throughout the sacred books."—*Kitto.* **12. proclaimed a fast**—The elders and nobles were carrying out Jezebel's directions. The proclamation of a fast indicated that there was cause for humiliation, either because of some calamity that had fallen upon the city or was about to fall. Jezebel did not scruple to attempt to cover her cruel perfidy with a cloak of religion. **set Naboth on high**—They made the case as public as possible, so that when the witnesses testified against him, indignation would be strong. **13. two men**—Under the Mosaic law the testimony of two witnesses was necessary to condemn one to death. **children of Belial**—"Base fellows."—*R. V.* Belial is not a proper name. It means "worthlessness," "recklessness." The sons of Belial were ready to become just such witnesses as Jezebel's conspiracy demanded. **Naboth did blaspheme God and the king**—There was not the slightest proof that Naboth was guilty of blasphemy against God. As to his blaspheming the king, it was unjust to construe his refusal to transfer to the king the vineyard, which was his ancestral possession, as either treason or blasphemy. **carried him forth**—According to Jewish law executions must take place "without the camp," or city (Lev. 24:13-16). **stoned him with stones**—The prescribed manner of inflicting the death penalty. The two witnesses were to cast the first stones at the condemned man.

14. they sent to Jezebel—The elders and nobles had lent themselves to the wicked Jezebel to become the murderers of an innocent man, and then made their official report to her. Among other sins involved in this series were covetousness, lying, perjury and murder. "The wild license of Jezebel's life, the magical fascination of her arts or of her character, became a proverb in the nation (2 Kings 9:22). Long afterward her name lived as the byword of all that was execrable, and in the Apocalypse it is given to a church or an individual in Asia Minor, combining in like manner fanaticism and profligacy" (Rev. 2:20).—*Smith.* **15. take possession of the vineyard**—Jezebel's plot seemed thus far to be successful. The death of Naboth and his sons apparently left no legal heir to the land, hence the way was open for Ahab to lay claim to it. **16. Ahab rose....to take possession**—At last the coveted prize was within his reach, and he was ready to take it, no matter at what cost of innocent blood. The satisfaction which he hoped to secure from the possession of the vineyard was destined to be turned into bitterness.

III. ELIJAH'S MESSAGE TO AHAB (vs. 17-29). **17. word of the Lord came to Elijah**—Although the prophet seemed to Ahab to have disappeared from Israel after the test at Carmel and the restoration of the rains, he was within hearing distance of Jehovah, ready to do his bidding. **18. to meet Ahab**—Elijah had met Ahab with messages from the Lord at the beginning of the drought, and again at its close. Once more he was called to face the guilty king. **which is in Samaria**—"Who dwelleth in Samaria."—*R. V.* The expression is used to indicate that Ahab was king and had his official residence in Samaria. **in the vineyard of Naboth**—The Lord gave the prophet explicit information as to where Ahab was and his errand there. **19. hast thou killed**—The question does not imply doubt, but is the strongest kind of affirmation. **thus saith the Lord**—Ahab and his wicked queen had proceeded in their fiendish purpose regardless of right or of Jehovah, but they must be made to know that Jehovah has regard for human conduct, and their wrongs must be expiated. **shall dogs lick thy blood**—Because of Ahab's repentance and humiliation (v. 29), this prophecy was not literally fulfilled in him, though at the pool of Samaria dogs did lick up his blood that fell on his chariot (1 Kings 22:38); but it was afterward fulfilled in his son, on whom Jehovah laid the burden (2 Kings 9:25).—*Whedon.* **20. hast thou found me, O mine enemy**—As the king had previously regarded Elijah as one who troubled Israel (1 Kings 18:17), so now he looked upon him as his enemy, failing to recognize in the prophet simply the messenger of God to him. **sold thyself**—Ahab stopped at no iniquity as long as he might gratify his depraved ambitions.

21-29. The prophet foretold the utter destruction of Ahab's family and the fate of Jezebel. Although the king was guilty of abominable evils, yet at the words of God by Elijah he came to himself sufficiently to humble himself before the Lord, and the threatened destruction was delayed for a time, but it was only delayed. The penalty must be executed. As we study the history of men and nations we are amazed at the great forbearance of God, yet we know that his judgments must fall at last.

QUESTIONS.—What request did Ahab make of Naboth? Why would it have been improper for Naboth to grant it? Where was Naboth's home? What were Ahab's feelings when his request was refused? Describe the course that Jezebel took. Of what sins was Jezebel guilty in this matter? Of what sins was Ahab guilty? How did Ahab and Elijah come to meet in Naboth's vineyard? Why did Ahab call Elijah his enemy? What penalty was pronounced upon Ahab? Upon Jezebel?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The principal recorded events in Elijah's life up to the time of this lesson. 2. His probable occupation from the time he called Elisha to his appearance to Ahab in Naboth's vineyard. 3. The victories of Israel over the Syrian army. 4. Ahab's leniency toward Benhadad.

II. Theme.—Covetousness and its attendant sins.

III. Ahab's greed.—1. Ahab's royal palaces. 2. Reasons why Ahab desired Naboth's vineyard. 3. Reasons why he should not have it. 4. The effect of disappointed ambitions. 5. Ahab's weakness of character. (1) A sulking disposition. (2) His readiness to allow Jezebel to do the despicable deed for which he did not wish to be personally responsible. (3) Yielding to the leadership of his conscienceless, heathen wife.

IV. A fiendish plot.—1. What stood in the way of Ahab's ambition? Not money, but the rights of another. 2. The cruel plot of Jezebel involved: (1) Hypocrisy, a fast proclaimed. (2) Subornation of witnesses, procuring false witnesses. (3) Perjury, giving false testimony. (4) The death of an innocent man and his sons (2 Kings 9:26). 3. One sin leads to another.

V. The consequences.—1. Consider the trouble that came to Ahab with the possession of Naboth's vineyard. (1) Short-lived satisfaction. (2) The meeting of Ahab and Elijah explained. (3) Ahab's guilty conscience manifested. (4) The vineyard was obtained by blood, and the vineyard called for blood. 2. The outlook before Ahab and Jezebel. 3. Ahab was not wholly beyond the possibility of being moved to humble himself. 4. God's estimate of Ahab's character set forth in verses 25 and 26.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**A climax reached.**

I. When Jezebel mocked Israel's God.
II. When Ahab connived at crime.
III. When Elijah appeared in Samaria.

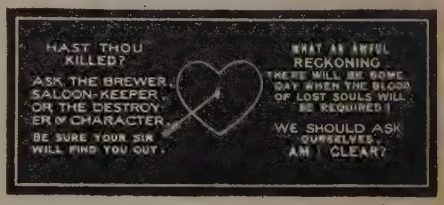
I. When Jezebel mocked Israel's God. A more pitiful picture of national depravity could scarcely be drawn than we find in this lesson. We see portrayed an unscrupulous magistracy, a demoralized people, a cruel and treacherous despotism, almost unparalleled in history. The tragedy here presented was opened with a fast, proclaimed ostensibly to avert from the nation the judgments of God, supposed to have been provoked by the alleged blasphemy and idolatry of Naboth. It was cruel murder in the name of law and religion, under the guise of zeal for the offended majesty of God. Jezebel was the real instigator and executor of that crime, notwithstanding she observed all legal proprieties. Treachery and murder came naturally to her. She was a woman of the most consummate subtlety, duplicity and cruelty. Naboth's death was a true martyrdom. He would not transgress the religious and statute law of Israel. Jezebel made use of the very religion she despised to bring to death the man who most faithfully exemplified it. It was mockery to God.

II. When Ahab connived at crime. The executor and guardian of law connived at the murder of a law-abiding subject. Ahab was wrong in wanting Naboth's vineyard, wrong in tempting Naboth to transgress the commandment of the Lord. His proposal showed a thorough lack of principle, a wicked contempt for God's law. It was the curse of his undisciplined desire that he never had enough. The value which Naboth placed upon his inheritance which had been handed down to him, could not be estimated by any purchase price which Ahab could make or any exchange he might offer. Ahab's rebellion against God had been long and obstinate. An alien marriage, an idolatrous life, the persecution of God's prophets, disobedience in war were stepping-stones which led to the robbery and murder of Naboth, a just man who suffered shameful wrongs with righteous dignity and patience.

III. When Elijah appeared in Samaria. Ahab lost no time in reaping the fruit of Jezebel's wickedness. With the sons of Belial there was no difficulty in swearing away the life of a good citizen. But for their compliance Jezebel might have been baffled. The Syrian princess whom Ahab had married was the enemy whose voice had tempted him into sin and lulled him into self-complacency, while Elijah was his truest, though sternest friend. The public manifestation of the righteous judgment of God was set forth in the appearance of Elijah, the great restorer of the law, who stood forth to avenge the death of Naboth. He performed his true function in pronouncing swift judgment on the cruel wrong. Since the day upon Carmel he had been hidden from view. His sudden appearance upon the scene filled Ahab with alarm. To him Elijah's presence was as the shadow of death. In all his former experiences he had found that the word of the Lord in the mouth of his prophet was truth. Ahab's question, "Hast thou found me?" was a self-revelation. He was undeceived in a moment by the direct words of Elijah. Ahab was brought face to face with righteousness, honor and judgment. A threefold crime was charged against him. He had provoked God to anger. He had led Israel into sin. He had sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord. The awful curse brought him to his senses and his knees. In the moment of his humiliation his remorse was sincere, his conscience aroused, his fears excited, his sense of God's justice real and his desire for pardon unfeigned. No change of heart or life followed. He did not forsake his idols nor surrender Naboth's vineyard nor abandon his self-confidence. God observed Ahab's humiliation, called Elijah's attention to it and extended his mercy in delayed judgment to encourage him to persevere until he had reached a full and sincere repentance. Exemption from personally witnessing the storms which were threatening his house was an instance of God's great condescension and mercy. The worthlessness of partial reformation was marked in the fact that judgment was suspended, but not removed.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The sin of covetousness. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness" (Luke 12:15). Tolstoi tells of a man who had received permission to possess as much land as he could walk around from sunrise to sunset. He started at the moment of sunrise and walked leisurely along. Soon he reflected that the faster he walked the more land he would receive. He quickened his pace, then broke into a run. The fever burned in his veins. The word with him was, more, more, more. With tremendous energy he forced his body to the last possible exertion, and, just as the sun was setting, reached the goal—and dropped dead. His men made a hole in the ground just long enough and wide enough to hold his body and buried him.

The scourge of trouble (v. 20). Ahab's enemy was not the prophet, but the sin he sheltered in his own heart and life. How common it is for people to blame the preacher, or Providence, or the neighbors, for the sins for which they themselves are responsible! Sin is the great troubler and enemy of man. After Adam and Eve sinned, they were in trouble, and tried to hide it by taking refuge among the trees of the garden. Ahab tried to hide his own sin by making some one else responsible for it. But Elijah said, "Thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord." It was his own tortured mind that was troubling him, for the "mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." "God, save us from ourselves! We carry within us the elements of hell if we but choose to make them such. Ahab, Judas, Nero, Borgia, Herod, all were once prattling infants in mothers' arms." The bestial and devilish Tiberius in his retreat at Capri, commenced a letter to the Senate with the words, "What I shall write to you, conscript fathers, how I shall write, or what in short I shall abstain from writing at this time, may the gods and the goddesses destroy me worse than I daily feel myself perishing, if I know." Commenting on this, Tacitus said, "To such an extent had his crimes and his enormities become punishments even to himself. Nor was it in vain that the wisest of men used to say that if the spirits of tyrants could be laid open we should see them all lacerated and scarred; for as men's bodies are mangled with blows, so is the mind torn by cruelty, by lust, by evil designs."

"Be sure your sin will find you out" (Golden Text). The dictograph is a little instrument which can be placed under a chair, behind a picture, in any unseen place, and through a receiver carry to a person in an adjoining room every detail of a conversation being carried on in supposed secrecy. A number of criminals have been caught recently through its use. Science is constantly emphasizing the fact that there are unseen forces all about us. Wireless messages sent out from Australia have been picked up in Canada. A recent wonder is the lighting of an electric bulb by wireless current, the bulb being several miles away. By placing the ear to a large shell one can hear a ceaseless murmur of sound. The human ear is only tuned to receiving and interpretating into sound, waves of a certain velocity. Job cried, "Oh, that my words were graven with an iron pen!" But who knows on what sensitive plate our every word is being recorded and our deeds stamped to face us at some later time? G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—One sin prepares the way for another.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Ahab's covetousness

Jezebel's cruelty

Elijah's faithfulness

A beginning. We are to study to-day about Ahab, Jezebel and Elijah. Recall some of the things that we have learned about them. Group a few practical lessons about the question, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" such as, God's right to direct us, his right to our service, his protecting care and our duty to trust him. Give a brief account of Ahab's war with Benhadad and his failure to gain the full victory that he should have realized, by not utterly destroying his enemy. Teach the danger of allowing one sin in the life. The present lesson illustrates the truth that one sin does not live long alone.

Ahab's covetousness. Let it be made clear that Ahab had great possessions. He was king over the ten tribes of Israel. He had a palace at Samaria, the capital, and another at Jezreel. Tell the story of his desire for Naboth's vineyard. Explain why it was not proper for Naboth to part with it. Some one has said that covetousness is like a thirsty man drinking the salt water of the sea. He drinks, but is not satisfied and wants more. The more he drinks, the less satisfied he is. Another thought to be impressed here is the folly and sin of becoming sulky when one does not obtain what he wants. Give a word picture of Ahab, a full-grown man, pouting, going to bed, turning his face to the wall and refusing to eat because the owner of a piece of land he wanted would not sell it to him. The children of the class will not wish to tell you that they sometimes sulk, even if they are guilty, so do not ask them. You can teach the truth here involved without embarrassing them.

Jezebel's cruelty. Write Jezebel's name on the board or on a tablet and under it write the evil things she did in getting for Ahab the vineyard he wanted, remembering that she did them because he coveted Naboth's vineyard, also keeping in mind that Ahab was as guilty as his wife. He let her do for him what he shrank from doing for himself. We are responsible for what we desire or allow others to do for us. In the list you make will be lying, perjury and murder.

Elijah's faithfulness. Describe vividly the meeting between Elijah and Ahab. Note the motives each had in going to Naboth's vineyard. Recall their former meetings and the messages the prophet brought to the king. The evidence that Ahab had a guilty conscience was the fact that he asked the question, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Study the evidences that children sometimes give that they have guilty consciences. Note that Elijah was faithful to reprove Ahab and Jezebel for their long series of wicked deeds, and pronounced a fearful sentence upon them.

LESSON II

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Oct. 4.—Elijah taken up into heaven.—2 Kings 2:1-12. Tu.—The successor of Elijah.—2 Kings 2:12-18. Wed.—Elisha chosen.—1 Kings 19:15-21. Th.—A widow aided.—2 Kings 4:1-7. Fr.—The true Elijah.—Mark 9:2-13. Sat.—Testimony of the master.—Matt. 11:2-14. Su.—Parting words.—Luke 24:44-53.

Elijah Taken up into Heaven.—2 Kings 2: 1-12.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 11, 12)

SUPT.—1 And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up E-li'jah into heaven by a whirlwind, that E-li'jah went with E-li'sha from Gil'gal.

School.—2 And E-li'jah said unto E-li'sha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Beth'-el. And E-li'sha said unto him, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth'-el.

3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth'-el came forth to E-li'sha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

4 And E-li'jah said unto him, E-li'sha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jer'i-cho. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jer'i-cho.

5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jer'i-cho came to E-li'sha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

6 And E-li'jah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jor'dan. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jor'dan.

8 And E-li'jah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that E-li'jah said unto E-li'sha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And E-li'sha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and E-li'jah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

12 And E-li'sha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Is'ra-el, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 And it came to pass, when Jehovah would take up Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. 2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for Jehovah hath sent me as far as Beth-el. And Elisha said, As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el. 3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. 4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for Jehovah hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho. 5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came near to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that Jehovah will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace. 6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry here, I pray thee; for Jehovah hath sent me to the Jordan. And he said, As Jehovah liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. 7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood over against them afar off: and they two stood by the Jordan. 8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. 9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I am taken from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. 10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. 11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!

And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Psa. 16: 11.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord calls his servants home when their work on earth is done.**

TOPIC.—**Perseverance rewarded.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Elijah called to depart. II. Elisha's request. III. Elijah taken to heaven.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 890.**

PLACES.—**Gilgal; Bethel; Jericho; the Jordan; a place east of the Jordan.**

INTRODUCTION.—We consider to-day the closing scene in the earthly life of a remarkable man. We have little record of the life of Elijah during the ten years which elapsed between the incident of Naboth's vineyard and the prophet's translation. During this time Ahab, the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, joined together to wage war against the king of Syria, and although Ahab took special precautions for his own safety he was slain in battle. To Ahab's son, Ahaziah, who succeeded him on the throne, Elijah was sent with a message, because the king had sent to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, instead of the God of Israel. Ahaziah was angered at the prophet because of his message and sent a company of fifty men to seize him, but Elijah called down fire from heaven to destroy them. A second captain with fifty men was sent and met a

like fate. **A third company was sent, but as the** captain humbled himself and pleaded for his life and the life of his men, they were spared and Elijah went with them to the king and repeated to him the message. See 2 Kings 1: 2-17. The prophet is mentioned in 2 Chron. 21: 12 as sending a letter of warning to Jehoram, king of Judah. The translation of Elijah is one of the most sublime events of which we have any record. The patriarchal age, the Mosaic age and the Christian age have each one instance of ascension to heaven from a state of full life and vigor. Of Enoch's translation little is recorded, of Elijah's we have more, and of Christ's ascension we have full accounts.

COMMENTARY.—I. Elijah called to depart (vs. 1-8). **1. when the Lord would take up Elijah**—The prophet's life-work was drawing to a close, and he was to enter upon his eternal reward. The events of that particular day indicate that he was still vigorous and capable of further labor. It is clear that there was still work to be done, but God's purpose called for the removal of his servant from earthly scenes. The question why God's workmen are removed to heaven in the midst of successful labor must remain unanswered until we shall know as we are known. **into heaven**—Into the eternal dwelling-place of the saints. **whirlwind**—A tempest. **from Gilgal**—In the hill country of Ephraim eight or nine miles northwest of Bethel. We learn from 2 Kings 4: 38 that there was a school of the prophets here. Elisha had been associated with Elijah for several years, in fact, since the return of the latter from Horeb. **2. tarry here**—Both Elijah and Elisha knew that the former was to be translated that day. Elijah desired to be alone when he went to heaven. Several reasons have been presented why Elijah requested Elisha to tarry at Gilgal. 1. His humility led him to avoid publicity while that great honor was being bestowed. 2. His love for solitude asserted itself in view of this, the most momentous event in his life. 3. He wished to spare Elisha the sight of his departure from earth. 4. He desired to test Elisha's devotion to him and to the work in which he was engaged. The first and the last of these views seem the most reasonable.

3. knowest thou—The "sons of the prophets" knew what the day would bring forth, probably by a direct revelation to them, for it is not likely that Elijah had told them of his approaching departure. **from thy head**—Recognizing that Elijah was the chief of the prophets, they must have considered it a serious thing for him to be removed when the worship and service of the God of Israel were greatly neglected and idolatry was prevalent. **yea, I know it; hold ye your peace**—This knowledge brought with it a sadness and a sense of the responsibility that must rest upon him, that made him feel that the subject was too sacred for discussion. **4. Jericho**—About twelve miles southeast of Bethel in the valley of the Jordan. Here also was a school of the prophets. These schools were places where young men were trained, under the direction of a recognized prophet, for religious service. They were not necessarily the sons of prophets. Their study was principally the law of Moses. Elijah was evidently making a farewell visit to the "sons of the prophets" at Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho. **6. the Lord hath sent me to Jordan**—The journey was toward the place from which he was to be taken up to heaven. It led from Gilgal to Bethel, to Jericho, to Jordan, and beyond. Elisha proved his devotion and fidelity by not allowing himself to be separated from Elijah.

7. fifty men....stood to view afar off—There was intense interest in what was soon to take place. **stood by Jordan**—Evidently it was not at a fording-place. **8. Elijah took his mantle**—It was doubtless of undressed skin, and the symbol of his office, which he had worn for years. "The power of wonder-working rested not with the prophet individually, but was attached to his office, of which this rough garment was the badge."—*Edersheim.* **wrapped it**—The prophet wound the mantle tightly into a roll in the form of a staff. **smote the waters**—Moses smote the waters of the Red Sea and they parted to permit the Israelites to escape from the pursuing Egyptians. Elijah smote the waters, which were obstructing his progress toward the place where he was to bid farewell to earth, and a path was opened through the Jordan. In some respects the lives of Moses and Elijah were much alike.

II. Elisha's request (vs. 9, 10). **9. ask what I shall do for thee**—If Elisha had yielded to Elijah's entreaty to tarry behind he would have missed this exalted favor. The request which Elisha would make would be a further index of his character. Solomon had been granted a similar privilege (1 Kings 3: 5). **before I be taken away from thee**—Elijah's departure had now become a subject of their conversation. **a double portion of thy spirit**—He did not ask for twice the amount of Elijah's spirit, but his request was for the portion falling to the first-born son under the Mosaic law. He was entitled to twice as much as any other child, so Elisha wished such a portion of his master's spirit that he might be equipped for the grave responsibilities which would soon fall upon him. Elisha showed his greatness of soul in this request. **10. a hard thing**—Elijah had no power to impart his spirit to Elisha, for that power must come from God.

III. Elijah taken to heaven (vs. 11, 12). **11. as they still went on, and talked**—Some think they approached Mount Nebo, from which Moses viewed the land of Canaan. They were making their last journey together and holding their final conversation. **a chariot of fire, and horses of fire**—These were creations of the spiritual world. This heavenly scene was no hallucination, but the chariot and horses of fire were a part of that vast host, the sound of whose movements David once heard over the mulberry trees (2 Sam. 5: 24), and which at a later time filled the mountains round about Elisha (2 Kings 6: 17).—*Whedon.* **and parted them both asunder**—The parting time came, but it was accompanied by glorious displays of the divine presence and power. **went up by a whirlwind**—We do not read that Elijah was borne by the chariot and horses of fire, but by a whirlwind. The fiery chariot and horses may have been simply a convoy for the prophet in his flight to heaven. **12. my father**—Elisha saw the chariot and the horses, and he beheld his master's ascent. He thus fulfilled the conditions upon which the request he made of Elijah was to be granted. In his astonishment he called after the departing prophet, and made an exclamation as he saw the chariot and horsemen.

QUESTIONS.—About when was the time of this lesson? How long had it been since the events on Mount Carmel? How were the schools of the prophets conducted? In what cities had such schools been established? Why did Elijah visit them at this time? What questions did the prophets ask Elisha? What was his answer? Why did Elisha refuse to leave Elijah? What request did Elisha make?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. Elijah's connection with the schools of the prophets, as their leader. 2. His experience with Ahaziah, king of Israel. 3. His letter to Jehoram, king of Judah (2 Chron. 21:12). 4. A hasty review of Elijah's life. 5. His prominent characteristics.

II. Theme.—Faithful to the end.

III. Elijah's last work.—1. God was nearly through with his servant on earth and Elijah knew it. 2. Trace his journey from Gilgal to the place of his translation. 3. The significance of his visits at Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho. 4. In view of his life and character we may imagine his feelings as he was completing his earthly work.

IV. Elijah's last earthly associate.—1. Elisha's call and service. 2. Elijah's desire to leave Elisha at various places did not arise from a lack of friendship between the two. 3. Various reasons may be suggested why Elijah repeatedly urged Elisha to remain behind. 4. Elisha's devotion. His persistency was not disobedience. 5. Elisha's request. (1) The privilege afforded him by Elijah. (2) The request. What it indicated.

V. Elijah's translation.—1. The translation of Enoch. 2. The place of Elijah's translation not definitely known, and it is not important that it should be. 3. His translation sudden. "As they still went on, and talked." Elisha's call came to him as he was at work. Elijah's translation took place as he was diligently engaged. 4. The display of divine glory.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Perseverance rewarded.**

I. Elijah admitted to heaven.

II. Elisha appointed to service.

I. Elijah admitted to heaven. The translation of Elijah embraces more than a mere historic statement. The theme has to do with the great scriptural doctrine of immortality. It gave to Israel a powerful confirmation of that great fact. When God would transfer one of his faithful servants to heaven and place another in his stead, he did it in a way most in keeping with the characteristic life of each. Elijah and Elisha were two of the most remarkable men in the history of the world. Both stood faithful in a faithless age. Elijah's departure was in harmony with his life. He was not destined to come to his end in weakness and decay. His entire public life and work had the character of a judge, on the one hand destroying and consuming, on the other reforming and constructing. His last hours were as full of service as if no change was coming. On the borders of heaven he was full of genuine humility. He displayed a spirit of calm self-possession. He had no thought of his own needs. His great desire was to leave a blessing for those remaining in service. He saw with clear vision that Elisha was the man to be considered most at that hour. The parting meant most to him. He was to continue the struggle of life. He was to stand before wicked kings and ungodly men as the messenger of God. The change which passed over Elijah which culminated in his reception into the invisible world is incomprehensible to us. We regard the entire event as a singular honor placed upon a singularly great and good man. It is an assured fact that God directed in the matter of closing a career which he had so perfectly controlled. Elijah's movements were directed by the Spirit of the Lord even to the last. He moved in sublime calmness in the most solemn crisis, ever thoughtful of the interests of others. His lifelong obedience and fidelity to God and zeal for his name, made him fearless when he approached the close of life. With him there was no murmur, no unwillingness to depart, no shrinking from entrance into the unseen world. He was fully prepared for translation.

II. Elisha appointed to service. The great responsibility which was to fall upon Elisha on the departure of Elijah was the matter which weighed upon the mind of the former as the two traveled together. His master had displayed a spirit of fidelity to duty, of faithfulness in rebuking sin, of fearlessness and courage in the presence of opposition and danger and also of marked tenderness and love. Elijah's suggestion that Elisha tarry drew out the qualities of his nature which proved him capable of receiving the answer to his request. It was no vain curiosity which prompted Elisha to go with Elijah. He had a correct perception of real worth with true aspiration after it. Admiration, reverence and devotion mingled in Elisha's love for Elijah. He made the wisest choice that could have been made in view of his future life-work. As Elijah was taken from view, Elisha's experience was similar to that of Isaiah when he received his prophetic call. Hitherto he had looked to his prophetic master for direction and encouragement. Here his eyes were fixed upon the embattled might of Jehovah. He was conscious that the place was filled with God's presence. His view of the situation was unselfish and patriotic. The falling mantle was a symbol of the transference of Elijah's unfinished tasks as well as an indication of Elisha's appointment as his successor. Elisha was assured by this token that his request was granted. His prayer for spiritual endowment for his work was answered. His importunity had prevailed. He had witnessed the departure of Elijah and recognized the hand of God in his translation. A vital faith in the presence and power of God in the world was begotten. That faith had sustained Elijah in all his service. It should also become an anchor to Elisha. In the school of prophets with Elisha as their head, the influence of Elijah would be perpetuated. Through the young men the vital life of godliness should be kept alive in the world. The theocracy which Elijah had founded, regardless of Ahab and Jezebel, could be perpetuated through the schools of prophets. Elijah had worked with a view to the future continuance of true piety in the world. Though the nation should continue in its tolerance of idolatry, and though it should at last go into captivity, there should be a body of faithful witnesses through whom God would declare his love and mercy, and through whom he could warn and admonish his people. T. B. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Two worlds (v. 1). The Bible speaks of the other world just as naturally and easily as we speak of the next county or state. For those who are ready, heaven is not far away. For the righteous, death is but the door to life. And to many of God's saints, there seems to be a peculiar fitness and appropriateness in the manner of their death. Enoch walked with God three hundred years; hence, how fitting and appropriate that he take a walk with God one day and never come back to the haunts of men! Moses was in the habit of being alone with God in the wind-swept desert and on the lightning-scarred mountain; hence, how fitting and appropriate that he should be alone with God on Nebo's lonely height when his spirit stepped out of its earthly tabernacle to be with God! Elijah's life was sharp and rugged in its outlines, and spectacular in the extreme; hence, how fitting and appropriate that he should be swept into the heavenlies by a whirlwind! Of no character, ancient or modern, are Stevenson's words more appropriate: "In the hot-fit of life, a tip-toe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound on to the other side. The noise of the mallet and chisel is scarcely quenched, the trumpets are hardly done blowing, when, trailing with him clouds of glory, this happy-starred, full-blooded spirit shoots into the spiritual land."

The vacancy filled (v. 11). As the whirlwind snatched Elijah up out of sight, the empty place was filled with the flaming chariot and horses of fire were sent to bear Elisha on the difficult path that lay before him. Elijah was gone, but the horses and fire were seen, later, for when Elisha's servant had his eyes opened, he saw "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 6:17). Mighty gaps are made in the ranks of God's militant hosts, but, like Isaiah, after the death and the funeral, those who remain catch visions of the Lord sitting upon his throne, and his glory filling the empty places. 1. The chariots of fire mean power. Elijah wrought miracles, but Elisha more than doubled them, and became so filled with power that even his bones had virtue to restore the dead to life (2 Kings 13:21). 2. The chariots of fire mean protection. With these the prophet was immortal until his work was done. They secured him from danger from a great host, with horses and chariots (2 Kings 6:14). They secured him when the king of Israel plotted to take his life (2 Kings 6:18). In the confidence inspired by these protecting forces, he could say, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings 6:16). 3. The chariots of fire mean purification. "The pentecostal baptism is a fire that refines all the graces imparted by the birth of the Spirit, taking away their sin and purging out their dross. There is a crudeness which seems to attach to the graces in their elementary and initial stages. Love has often a tone of harshness in it, meekness a vein of sharpness, patience a taint of petulance, and gentleness a twang of bitterness. These alloys bring frowns to the face, flushes to the cheek, and fire to the eye. They run the voice up to the high octaves. They teach the hands to war and the fingers to fight. By the renewing of the Holy Ghost, these disturbing and distressing admixtures of carnality are smelted out, and the pure gold of holiness appears." G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—Elijah was faithful to the end.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

ELIJAH { FINISHING HIS WORK / TALKING WITH ELISHA / TAKEN TO HEAVEN

A beginning. Since we come to-day to the close of Elijah's earthly life, it will be well to call out briefly by questions the main events that have been studied. Have the children try to think, without speaking, of some one thing that they remember about him. After each has had time to try to recall one, ask them individually what they have thought of. A few words on each event will cover the ground in an interesting manner. These will include his three appearances to Ahab, his stay at Cherith and at Zarephath, with the raising of the widow's son, the victory at Carmel, the run to Jezreel, the flight to Horeb, and the calling of Elisha. Tell of some of Elijah's good qualities which will appeal to the children. His courage, his fidelity and his faith will be readily grasped by them.

Elijah finishing his work. At one time John Wesley was asked what he would do if he knew that he was to die that night. His reply was that he would do just as he had planned, and would retire as usual to wake up in glory. Explain to the class that Elijah knew that he was to be taken to heaven that day, and that he was at the head of at least three schools where young men were trained for religious work. The prophet visited each place where the "sons of the prophets" were, for the last time on that day. It was a sad day for those young men as they saw their leader for the last time. Impress upon the children the thought that we have each work to do, and that we ought to attend to it each day as it comes to us. If Elijah had been neglectful he would have missed the great honor that was bestowed upon him in his translation. Your class should be made to feel the necessity of giving themselves to the Lord early, even now.

Talking with Elisha. Tell how Elisha had been with Elijah for several years getting ready to take up Elijah's work after that prophet should go away to heaven. Explain Elisha's determination to stay with Elijah until the end. As Elisha clung to his master so we should cling to Christ. If you have time tell briefly the story of Ruth and Naomi. Place emphasis upon the request that Elisha made. It was not a selfish desire, for Elisha wanted a large measure of his master's spirit that he might do the work which lay before him. Elisha's devotion gained his desire. Speak of his receiving Elijah's mantle and what he did with it.

Taken to heaven. Picture the scene of Elijah's translation. He and Elisha were walking and talking together when suddenly the chariot and horses of fire appeared and separated the two prophets. Refer to Enoch who was taken to heaven without dying. Although the chariot and horses of fire were there, the record says that Elijah was taken up to heaven by a whirlwind. Tell the story of the fifty men who searched for the prophet after he was taken up. Impress the duty of being always ready to meet the Lord.

LESSON III

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Oct. 11.—Elisha heals Naaman the Syrian.—2 Kings 5: 1-14. Tu.—Unselfishness and avarice.—2 Kings 5: 15-27. Wed.—A severe lesson.—Num. 12: 4-15. Th.—A call to service.—Matt. 20: 20-28. Fr.—Friend and healer.—Matt. 15: 21-31. Sat.—Ten lepers healed.—Luke 17: 11-19. Su.—The good Samaritan.—Luke 10: 25-37.

Elisha Heals Naaman the Syrian.—2 Kings 5: 1-27. Print 5: 1-10, 14.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 7, 8)

SUPT.—1 Now Na'a-man, captain of the host of the king of Syr'i-a, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syr'i-a: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.

School.—2 And the Syr'i-ans had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Is'ra-el a little maid; and she waited on Na'a-man's wife.

3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Sa-mar'i-a! for he would recover him of his leprosy.

4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Is'ra-el.

5 And the king of Syr'i-a said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Is'ra-el. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

6 And he brought the letter to the king of Is'ra-el, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Na'a-man my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

7 And it came to pass, when the king of Is'ra-el had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

8 And it was so, when E-li'sha the man of God had heard that the king of Is'ra-el had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Is'ra-el.

9 So Na'a-man came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of E-li'sha.

10 And E-li'sha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jor'dan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jor'dan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

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1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him Jehovah had given victory unto Syria: he was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. 2 And the Syrians had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maiden; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3 And she said unto her mistress, Would that my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! then would he recover him of his leprosy. 4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maiden that is of the land of Israel. 5 And the king of Syria said, Go now, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. 6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, And now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. 7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? but consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. 9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. 10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—I am the Lord that healeth thee. Exod. 15: 26.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**Those who are humble and trustful are blessed.**

TOPIC.—**The divine Healer.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Naaman's leprosy. II. A remedy proposed. III. The leprosy cured. IV. Gehazi's sin.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 889.**

PLACES.—**Damascus; Samaria; the Jordan.**

INTRODUCTION.—We have already been introduced to Elisha from having studied about his call and his association with Elijah up to the time of the translation of the latter. Through his association with Elijah he became acquainted with the duties of his office and the conditions prevailing in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. While the two prophets stood successively in the same relation to Israel, they were very different in their natures. Elijah was a rugged son of the wilderness, bold and self-denying. Elisha was less abrupt and stern in his manner, yet as faithful and devoted to the cause of Jehovah as was his illustrious predecessor. By Elijah's hand several miracles were wrought, but by Elisha's twice as many. We have the dividing of the Jordan, the healing of the waters of Jericho, the destruction of the mocking children, the supply of water for the armies contending against the Moabites and the increasing of the widow's oil. He restored to life the Shunammite's child. He twice provided food in time of famine. In the first instance he healed the deadly pottage (2 Kings 4: 38-41); in the second, he fed a hundred men abundantly with a supply of food not sufficient for more than twenty. The healing of Naaman forms one of the most interesting stories in the scriptures. It shows by illustration the power of Christ to cleanse away the malady of sin, presenting at the same time the conditions upon which the remedy becomes effective.

COMMENTARY.—I. NAAMAN'S LEPROSY (v. 1). **1. Naaman**—The name is Hebrew as well as Syrian, and means "pleasant," "beautiful." **cap-**

tain—He was commander-in-chief of the armies of Syria. **a great man with his master**—He stood high in the estimation of Benhadad, king of Syria, because of his successes in war. There is a tradition, evidently without foundation, that Naaman was the man who, in the battle between Syria and Israel (1 Kings 22:34), drew his bow at a venture and slew Ahab. **honourable**—Honored. **a mighty man in valour**—He was possessed of unusual courage and skill. As the warrior in that age engaged in hand to hand combat with the enemy, he must have physical strength to be successful, and Naaman must have been strong physically before he was afflicted with the leprosy. **but**—A word of wonderful significance in this narrative and in almost every phase of human experience. With all his greatness, his skill, his bravery and success Naaman was a leper. This would be his ruin. It was only a question of time with him when he would become an outcast. **he was a leper**—The disease of leprosy was, and is still, one of the most dreaded of all physical maladies. It was widespread, being found in many lands and climes. It was also considered incurable.

II. A remedy proposed (vs. 2-10). **2. by companies**—Troops of Syrians entered the territory of Israel upon marauding expeditions to secure whatever plunder they were able. **brought away captive**—To be held as a slave. **a little maid**—This young Israelitish girl was torn from her loved ones at home and taken into a strange country and among a strange people. Only those who have had the experience can realize the suffering and the heartache of such a calamity, yet this girl, trained in the religion of Israel, rose above her surroundings and made known her faith in God. "Like Joseph in Egypt, and Daniel in Babylon, this captive girl becomes the instrument of making Jehovah known among the heathen."—*Whedon.* **waited on Naaman's wife**—The service was far different from that required of slaves in more modern times. This girl was upon familiar terms with her mistress, and felt an interest in the welfare of her master. **3. would God**—"Would that."—*R. V.* Expressive of deep desire. **my lord**—Naaman. **the prophet that is in Samaria**—Elisha. The Jewish girl had been familiar with the remarkable career of this servant of Jehovah. **would recover him**—Literally, "gather" him from his leprosy. An allusion to the Israelitish custom of shutting lepers out of the camp and then gathering in those who were found to be free from leprosy. **5. go to, go**—An expression calling for immediate action. The king at once opened the way for Naaman to apply to the king of Israel for relief. **departed, and took with him**—He took a present to Jehoram. We can not estimate the value accurately. The money was probably weighed, and "talents," and "pieces," or shekels, were standards of weight. "A silver talent was worth $1.944, in all $19,440. A gold shekel was worth $9.75, in all $58,500."—*Bible Treasury.* According to this Naaman took nearly $78,000. **raiment**—Doubtless it was clothing of great value. **6. that thou mayest recover him**—The king of Syria considered it fitting to make the request directly to the king of Israel, who would at once be able to give Naaman all needful information. **7. rent his clothes**—In token of his distress of mind. Not only was Jehoram powerless to heal the disease, but he was not even sufficiently familiar with Elisha to direct the leper to him.

8. Elisha....heard—No doubt the coming of the Syrian general with his retinue, and the fact that the king had rent his clothes, caused a sensation in Samaria, and the news came speedily to Elisha, who appears to have had his home in the capital city. **wherefore**—A rebuke to the king for not knowing of the presence and power of the man of God. **a prophet in Israel**—It was to be shown that the God of Israel was the true God, for the good of the king of Israel as well as for the good of Naaman and the kingdom he represented. Jehoram had neglected the worship of Jehovah and needed to be reproved. **9. at the door of the house of Elisha**—It was a magnificent retinue that halted at Elisha's door. **10. sent a messenger**—There were two reasons why Elisha did not personally appear to Naaman. He desired the captain to realize that it was by the power of Jehovah that the cure would be wrought and not by human means. He also wished Naaman to humble himself and accept the simple conditions proposed by the prophet. **seven times**—"The sacred number seven was used in the Levitical observances connected with the cleansing of healed lepers."

III. The leprosy cured (vs. 11-19). **11-13.** According to Naaman's idea Elisha had not shown him enough deference. He supposed that Elisha would use some method of cure in keeping with his office as prophet and in keeping with Naaman's high position in the kingdom of Syria. He scoffed at the idea of bathing in the yellow waters of the Jordan, while the waters of the Abana and Pharpar at home were clear. Naaman's pride had been injured and he was angry. His servants did not fully enter into his feelings. They saw the need of a cure and thought that relief from any source or by any means ought to be welcomed. They dared to reason with their master, and their argument was so clear and convincing that he was brought to think better of Elisha's directions. **14. then went he down**—He went "down" in a twofold sense. He got down from his high place of pride, humbling himself to accept the word of the prophet, and he went down into the despised waters of the Jordan. **he was clean**—He submitted to the directions given by Elisha, obeyed and was healed. It was divine power that wrought the cure. It was an object-lesson to Syria that the God of Israel was a God of power. **15-19.** When Naaman realized that his cure was complete he returned to bestow a present upon Elisha, but the prophet would take nothing. Naaman was led to believe in the God of Israel.

IV. Gehazi's sin (vs. 20-27). Gehazi was base and conscienceless. He had no regard for honesty or truth and was willing to show Elisha in an unfavorable light. The prophet had refused the presents that Naaman had offered, and he would appear weak and changeable if he sent after him to ask for what he had refused. His great sin was covetousness and to this he added deception, falsehood and theft. The punishment visited upon him was severe, but not too severe for his crime.

QUESTIONS.—Who was king of Israel? Of Syria? Who was Naaman? What can you say of the leprosy? Who waited on Naaman's wife? What did this servant tell her mistress? What did the king of Syria do? Where did Naaman go? What did he take as a present? What did the king of Israel do? What word did Elisha send to the king? What did the prophet tell Naaman to do? Why was Naaman angry? What did his servants say to him? What did Naaman finally decide to do? What was the result? What was Gehazi's sin?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. Elisha's call and training. 2. The miracles performed by Elisha. 3. A comparison between Elijah and Elisha. 4. Israel greatly favored in having the ministry of such prophets as these. 5. The cleansing of the leper bears a striking analogy to salvation from sin.

II. Theme.—The power of Israel's God to heal and save.

III. The leprosy.—1. Leprosy is progressive. 2. It is a loathsome disease. 3. It is incurable by human agency. 4. The disease is fatal. 5. In all of these respects leprosy is typical of sin. 6. Naaman was a great man, and had brilliant prospects, "but he was a leper."

IV. The remedy spurned.—1. Note the condition of this Jewish slave girl. 2. Her early religious training and interest in her master. 3. A means of bringing the knowledge of the true God to a heathen nation. 4. Her faith and zeal bring a lesson to us. 5. The king of Syria and his chief military man made proper application for help. 6. The embarrassing situation of Jehoram. 7. Naaman considered himself slighted by Elisha. 8. The leper preferred his leprosy to the humiliation of employing the simple means proposed.

V. The remedy applied.—1. A better thought came later. 2. The wise and effective suggestion of Naaman's servant. 3. A complete cure resulted from the application of the remedy. 4. The effect of the cure upon Naaman's religious belief and practise. 5. The assurance that God gives to those whose sins are forgiven. 6. Elisha's refusal of Naaman's gift. The prophet's work was not for money. 7. The sins of Gehazi. (1) Covetousness. (2) Falsehood. (3) Deception. 8. The punishment inflicted.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**The divine Healer.**

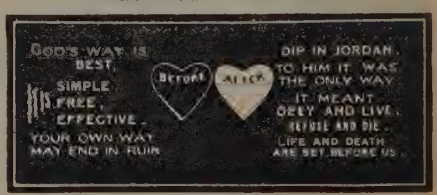
I. Proclaimed in heathen lands.
II. Acknowledged as God supreme.

I. Proclaimed in heathen lands. The lesson introduces Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, a great man. He was great in his position, in his possessions, in his achievements, and in his authority. Beside his greatness are portrayed the circumtances of a captive Hebrew maid. She possessed two qualities that are never little or insignificant, a kind heart and faith in God. She merits the name of a great missionary. She was the means of bringing salvation to the house of her captivity, and of raising up a testimony for God, which rang through the whole land of Syria. Humble as she was, she initiated the entire series of events which form the substance of this narrative. She did the service that was nearest her. She just told where the blessing of health was likely to be found, to the effect that there was a remedial power in Israel equal to the emergency and that such power was delegated to the prophet Elisha. She knew that God was with Elisha and therefore she had no doubt about Elisha's success. It was no barrier to her simple, generous faith that Naaman's disease was incurable and he not one of God's covenant people. It was a splendid testimony to the character and influence of Elisha that he had awakened such confidence in the soul of the little maid. A few words from her moved the household of Naaman. No one could doubt the sincerity of her confidence or the genuineness of her sympathy. Her words were the candid, artless statement of a truthful child. They carried conviction to all who heard them, so that the courtiers found themselves actually taking Naaman's cure for granted and proceeded to discuss the method by which it could be accomplished. Even the king said, "Go." God turned the calamity of her captivity into blessing. He directed her life through that strange way in order to do for that great man what he could not do for himself and what none in his own land could do for him. She had so much true faith that it filled her whole nature and made her faithful under severe trial.

II. Acknowledged as God supreme. High military command, great favor at court, splendid reputation, great success and noted personal bravery were desirable accomplishments, yet no honor, no valor, no victory could place Naaman beyond the reach of his sore calamity of leprosy. Only one way promised deliverance to him. One thing could change his grief into joy. He was directed to that by a child who sought his deliverance more than her own. Neither Benhadad, king of Syria, nor Joram, king of Israel, was of any real help to Naaman in his trouble. The king of Syria placed the whole responsibility of seeing that his captain was cured upon the king of Israel, supposing him to be supreme in matters of religion. Israel's king viewed his letter as a request for the impossible, as an attempt to force a quarrel, as an attack upon his insufficiency. Naaman was on the point of being sent away when Elisha interposed. His words to the king were a rebuke to his faithlessness as well as an exhortation to him to seek help where it was to be found. Naaman's leprosy had not humbled his pride. Elisha knew what respect was due to authority and station, but just then he was dealing with Naaman, the individual, the leper, and not in his capacity as a great general. As a servant of God it was his duty to benefit Naaman's soul as well as his body. But for the kindly expostulations of his servants Naaman would have returned a leper still. A second time the blessing was nearly missed. This time through his own folly and obstinacy. God designed to show mercy to Naaman for his own glory and for a testimony that the Gentiles were not outside the reach of his grace. In one sentence Elisha delivered his soldierly order as a mightier soldier than Naaman. It seemed to Naaman like a studied slight put upon the rivers of his native country; as an intentional humiliation put upon himself to require him to bathe in the Jordan. He showed his good sense in giving up his anger and foolish resolve. To be cured of such a disease in such a manner convinced Naaman of the power of God and that Elisha was his true prophet. His new conviction reversed his old prejudices and the religious creed of his country. His new nature was manifested in his conduct.

T. B. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The leveling power of sin. "Now Naaman.... was a great man with his master....he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper" (v. 1). The little connective "but," is the fly in the ointment of peace and contentment. David was a mighty warrior-king and the sweet singer of Israel, but he was guilty of adultery and murder. Ahab had the wealth of a great king, but Naboth's vineyard was hard by his palace and he wanted it for his own possession. There was a certain rich man whose barns were filled with plenty, but he was not rich toward God. Aaron Burr was a brilliant man, but he was a traitor. One may be a multi-millionaire, but he can not buy a new stomach or purchase a new digestive apparatus. "A single 'but,' like a decimal point before millions, reduces all the gifts of fortune to fractions of trifling value." Naaman and the beggar, the royal debauchee and the drunken loafer, the refined cynic and the ignorant blasphemer—there is no distinction, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Sin reduces us all to a common level.

The weak things of this world (v. 2). She was only a captive Jewish maid, but was instrumental in bringing a great blessing to the haughty captain. It is said that the great Welsh revival which swept over Wales and portions of England a few years ago started with the earnest testimony of a young girl in a prayer meeting. All she said was, "Oh, I do so love Jesus!" and then sat down. The revival that followed is considered by some to be the most glorious and far-reaching outpouring of the Holy Spirit in this generation. The keeper of a lighthouse on the coast of Cornwall went ashore one day, and was seized and held by a band of wreckers, who planned to rob the vessels which would be wrecked through the lamps not being lighted. They forgot the little daughter of the keeper. When the time came, all alone and frightened as she was, she climbed the long stairs and lighted all the lights. God uses the forgotten things, and the "things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are" (1 Cor. 1:28).

The madness of pride. "But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper" (v. 11). The whole plan was to magnify Naaman and gratify his pride. But Elisha treated Naaman as a common beggar. Pride must fall if we would receive anything from the hand of God. Von Grafe was a very noted oculist who devoted himself to a hospital in Berlin. The Dowager Queen of Prussia was very anxious that Von Grafe should come and see about her eyes; but he refused time and again. At last he consented to go. A special train brought him to Potsdam where the queen resided. On reaching the palace he was informed that her majesty was not up yet, but that she would receive him in an hour. The great doctor took out his watch and said, "In an hour I will be in Berlin." No such words had ever been spoken in the palace before. "Yes, in an hour, you can tell her, I will be back in my hospital." And she came in a hurry. Naaman had to come to the prophet's conditions in spite of his pride. So with every one of us, God has a way of humbling our pride. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—Humility and faith bring relief.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Naaman's leprosy
A captive girl's mission
A prophet faithful to God
A perfect cure wrought

Elisha's life story. For a review of Elisha's life write his name in large letters on the board, and to the right of it group the principal events of his life. Tell briefly the stories of his rendering the poisonous pottage harmless, and of his feeding a hundred men with a small supply of food. Call attention to Christ's feeding the multitudes. The new event in Elisha's life as told to-day is full of interest. The spiritual application is very simple and should be impressed in a few words as the narrative proceeds.

A famous leper. The children already have some ideas about the leprosy. Let them tell you what they know, and jot down on the board their answers in a few words, then mark off those that are not right. Tell of Naaman's greatness as a general, his wealth and his standing with the king. With all this was he perfectly happy? No? Why? "But he was a leper." Frank is a fine boy, "but" he has a bad temper. Fannie is an attractive girl, "but" sometimes she is untruthful. Show how the leprosy of sin manifests itself.

A slave girl's mission. It will not be difficult to picture a Jewish family living quietly and happily in a little village in Israel, and suddenly one day attacked by a band of plundering Syrians, who take everything of value about the house, and also capture a young girl of the family to carry her back to Syria to sell her as a slave. She is placed in Naaman's home to wait upon his wife. She has been carefully trained at home and has carried her religious teachings with her. She has seen or heard about Elisha's miracles. She wishes her master well, and tells how she believes he could be healed of his leprosy. Here is an excellent opportunity to tell what a child can do for the Lord. It was hard for her to be held as a slave away from her home and among a strange people, yet she remembered the true God. Just a few words led to Naaman's cure and to his belief in Jehovah.

A faithful prophet. Paint a word picture of the retinue of Naaman as he approached the palace of Jehoram in Samaria, and see how troubled the king was as he read the letter of the king of Syria. By questioning bring out the facts of Elisha's message to the king, of Naaman's halting at Elisha's door, of the captain's pride and anger and of his servant's wise and timely counsel. Call attention to the part in this event taken by two servants, the Jewish captive and Naaman's servant.

A perfect cure. Tell about the clear waters of Damascus and the muddy waters of the Jordan. Be sure to explain that it was not the water that cleansed Naaman's leprosy, but the power of God as he obeyed the words of the prophet. We can be made free from the leprosy of sin by obeying God's commands.

LESSON IV

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Oct. 18.—Elisha's heavenly defenders.—2 Kings 6:8-23. Tu.—Promise of plenty.—2 Kings 6:24–7:2. Wed.—Flight of the enemy.—2 Kings 7:3-8. Th.—The promise fulfilled.—2 Kings 7:9-20. Fr.—Jehovah's lovingkindness.—Psa. 36. Sat.—Jehovah the deliverer.—Psa. 34:1-10. Su.—Jehovah the helper.—Psa. 34:11-22.

Elisha's Heavenly Defenders.—2 Kings 6: 8-23. Print 6: 8-17.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 16, 17)

SUPT.—8 Then the king of Syr'i-a warred against Is'ra-el, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

School.—9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Is'ra-el, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syr'i-ans are come down.

10 And the king of Is'ra-el sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syr'i-a was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Is'ra-el?

12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but E-li'sha, the prophet that is in Is'ra-el, telleth the king of Is'ra-el the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

13 And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Do'than.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17 And E-li'sha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about E-li'sha.

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8 Now the king of Syria was warring against Israel; and he took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. 9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are coming down. 10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of; and he saved himself there, not once nor twice. 11 And the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel? 12 And one of his servants said, Nay, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. 13 And he said, Go and see where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. 15 And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host with horses and chariots was round about the city. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? 16 And he answered, Fear not; for they that are with us are more than they that are with them. 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, Jehovah, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And Jehovah opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Psa. 34:7.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord is the defense of his people.**

TOPIC.—**Elisha's body-guard.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Elisha defending Israel. II. Elisha sought. III. Elisha protected. IV. An army captured.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 889.**

PLACES.—**Dothan; Samaria.**

INTRODUCTION.—The several incidents recorded in the life of Elisha go to show that the prophet was intensely interested not only in the religious well-being of the nation, but also in its temporal prosperity. His miracles for the most part had a bearing upon national affairs, but a few were of a more private character. Elisha seems to have escaped for the most of his life the displeasure of the king of Israel, owing probably to the fact that Jehoram's disposition was very different from that of Ahab, who had been persistent in his opposition to Elijah. It is also a fact that Elisha was less rugged than Elijah, yet each was the kind of prophet his particular period demanded. Elijah was the man for the test at Mount Carmel and the connected incidents, while Elisha was the prophet to deal with Naaman and with the famine in Samaria. The miracle at the Jordan where the iron ax-head was made to float brings out the fact that the schools of the prophets were prosperous even in those times of religious degeneracy. It was probably the house at Jericho that was too small to accommodate the increasing number of the "sons of the prophets" (2 Kings 6:1-7), and it became necessary for a larger place to be provided. Elisha's activity in connection with these centers of religious interest, was, no doubt, instrumental in their increasing prosperity, and their influence must have been great throughout the kingdom. The lesson to-day gives a striking demonstration of God's protecting care over individuals as well as nations.

COMMENTARY.—I. ELISHA DEFENDING ISRAEL (vs. 8-12). **8. king of Syria**—It was Benhadad II, who had been at war with Israel previously (1 Kings 20:1), and who had given much trouble to that nation. He was slain by Hazael, a servant of his, a few years later, and his slayer reigned in his stead. **warred against Israel**—This war was like that known in modern times as guerrilla warfare, in which bands of plunderers made incursions into the enemy's territory. **took counsel**—The king of Syria took direction of the campaign and gave orders to his bands as to where they should locate the camps to be most effective against Israel. The plan was to set ambuscades to entrap the Israelitish army. **9. the man of God**—Elisha was in communication with God, and the plans of the Syrian king were so disclosed to him, that through the in-

formation made known to the king of Israel all the efforts of the Syrian bands became futile. Such displays of Jehovah's power and interest in Israel's welfare should have led the nation to humility and obedience. **pass not such a place**—Writers differ as to their interpretation of this expression. One view is that Israel was warned to keep the armies away from certain specified places, where the Syrians were intending to set ambuscades. The other view is that Israel was warned not to overlook those particular places, but to preoccupy them by superior forces in order to defeat the Syrians. In either case the knowledge of God and his care for Israel are displayed. **10. saved himself**—With divine direction, and obedience on his part, he was easily able to defeat the forces of the enemy. **not once nor twice**—Jehoram, the king of Israel, was highly favored in having Elisha to help him in this time of trouble, for he brought relief to him again and again.

11. heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled—It was a great annoyance to him that all his well-laid plans should be frustrated by being made known to the king of Israel. Under such circumstances his courage would be likely to fail, unless he could put an end to the disclosures that were being made. **shew me which of us is for the king of Israel**—The king of Syria naturally supposed that there was an Israelitish spy reporting to Israel the movements of the Syrians or that there was a traitor in his camp. **12. none O king**—We are not told where this servant obtained the information, but it is probable that an Israelite had told him. **Elisha....telleth the king**—This Syrian believed that the God of Israel had the ability to know the movements of the Syrian army and make them known to Elisha, who told all to the king of Israel. **in thy bedchamber**—The most secret plans of the Syrian king were matters of knowledge to the prophet.

II. Elisha sought (vs. 13-15). **13. go and spy**—"Go and see."—*R. V.* **that I may send and fetch him**—It was presumption on the part of Benhadad to attempt to capture the prophet who had been given the power to foretell his movements, and thus defeat all his plans. **he is in Dothan**—Dothan was twelve miles north of Samaria on the road from Samaria to Damascus. The name means "double fountain." It was here that Joseph went in search of his brethren, and from here he was sold to the Ishmaelites (Gen. 37:17). It is possible that Elisha had a residence here as well as in Samaria. **14. horses, and chariots, and a great host**—Not a mere band of marauders, but an organized army. The Syrian king had high respect for the power of the prophet, as is shown by his sending "a great host" to capture him. An army was commissioned to arrest one man, but what was an army before a man in positive communication with heaven? **came by night**—The king made use of the strategy of war to gain his purpose, not realizing that the God of Israel never slumbers. "In all parts of the East, the sudden raids, which are so characteristic of Oriental warfare, generally take place at night and under cover of darkness."—*Tristram.* **compassed the city about**—Reminding one of David's words, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear" (Psa. 27:3). Benhadad's plan was well laid to insure success if no supernatural element were to be considered. **15. the servant**—Probably not Gehazi, who had become a leper. **alas, my master! how shall we do**—To the servant the situation appeared a dangerous one, for the horses and chariots of the Syrian host had surrounded the place with the one purpose of securing possession of "the man of God," and escape seemed to be an impossibility.

III. Elisha protected (vs. 16-18). **16. fear not**—It is interesting and encouraging to note the many places in the Bible where this expression is used. Elisha spoke the words out of his own courageous soul. **they that be with us are more than....with them**—The servant saw his master and himself helpless, surrounded by a hostile host; but Elisha saw, in addition, a host of heavenly defenders. The prophet believed that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psa. 34:7), and his faith and courage must have inspired the heart of his servant. **17. and Elisha prayed**—Prayer is the never-failing means of help. Elijah prayed and fire fell from heaven to consume the sacrifice (1 Kings 18:36-38); Elisha prayed and the Shunammite's son was restored to life. God's people in all ages have had recourse to prayer. **open his eyes, that he may see**—His physical eyes were open and he saw the host of the enemy. Elisha's prayer was that his spiritual eyes might be opened that he might see the host that surrounded them for their defense. The heavenly defenders were already there and all that was needed was a vision that could perceive them. **the mountain was full**—The hill upon which Dothan was situated was thronged with heavenly defenders. The young man saw the truthfulness of what Elisha had said. "They that be with us are more than they that be with them," and there could be no occasion to fear. They who see the hosts arrayed against them for the purpose of impeding their spiritual progress, and do not see with the eye of faith the army of defenders, arrayed to help them, are at a great disadvantage. **horses and chariots of fire**—On the one side were the horses and chariots of the Syrians with mere men as drivers and warriors, on the other were fiery horses and chariots with angelic leaders to insure the victory. God has unnumbered means at his command to call to the defense of his own. **18.** When the Syrian host came to capture the prophet they were wholly unaware of the presence of the army that was defending him, and supposed their task was an easy one.

IV. An army captured (vs. 19-23). A whole army went out to surround one man by night to make him a prisoner, and that one man in the morning took the entire army prisoners and led them to his king. As the prophet prayed and their eyes were opened, they indeed saw the man whom they sought but not in the place they expected. Through the generous treatment accorded to the Syrian host when they were wholly at the mercy of Israel their attacks upon Israel ceased and for a time there was peace between the two nations. This was one more divine manifestation to Israel of the power of Jehovah in behalf of the nation, but little heed was given to it.

QUESTIONS.—What great miracle was wrought in the last lesson? Who was the king of Syria? Why did he think that some of his men were traitors? What explanation did his servants make? What did the Syrian king do? Where was Dothan? Why was Elisha's servant afraid? How did Elisha quiet his fears? What prayer did Elisha offer for the Syrians? How is it shown that Elisha did not deal treacherously with them? Where did the prophet lead them? How did he treat them?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. Connect this lesson with the preceding one. (1) The same prophet. (2) The same nations involved. (3) A miracle in each. (4) The intervening miracle. 2. God has regard for the welfare of individuals and for nations. 3. As the prophet was beset by enemies, so the Christian is opposed by mighty forces. 4. Deliverance comes to them from the same source from which it came to Elisha.

II. Theme.—God's protecting care.

III. Elisha the patriot.—1. There are some to-day who think it improper for Christians to take part in the affairs of government. 2. Elisha had the welfare of his nation at heart. 3. The responsibility placed upon Elisha by virtue of the knowledge given to him by Jehovah. 4. Reasons why the prophet was entrusted with this knowledge. (1) The welfare of the nation was at stake. (2) Elisha was patriotic. (3) Elisha knew the voice of God. 5. Israel's success in the war with Syria.

IV. Elisha's arrest attempted.—1. The suspicions of Benhadad as to the source of Israel's information about his movements. 2. Elisha's reputation as a prophet extended outside his own nation. 3. The source of Elisha's knowledge. 4. Elisha's location sought by the king of Syria. 5. Benhadad's shortsightedness in attempting to capture Elisha. 6. The carefully laid plan of the Syrian host to take the prophet.

V. Elisha's great deliverance.—1. The fear that possessed Elisha's servant. (1) It arose from his lack of faith in God. (2) He had not had the vision. 2. The prayer of the prophet. (1) Not for an army to defeat the Syrians. (2) For eyes to see the host at hand to defend Elisha and his servant. 3. The necessity of having our spiritual eyes opened. 4. The ease with which Elisha became the victor and captor.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Elisha's body-guard.**

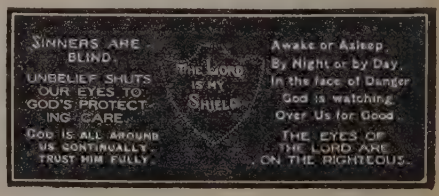
I. Insured protection and guidance.
II. Led to the confusion of enemies.

I. Insured protection and guidance. The war which Benhadad, the king of Syria, began against Israel was intended to be carried on by a series of surprises. He was determined to subjugate Israel. His chagrin at the continued frustration of his schemes was great. His attack upon Elisha and his servant was unfair and apparently unequal, an armed host against two unarmed men. It seemed out of all proportion and altogether absurd. The army presented a very formidable appearance. The escape of the prophet and his servant seemed hopeless. They were placed in circumstances to require superhuman help. There were enemies which they could not subdue, perils from which their unaided power could not extricate them. With the forces of the invisible King interposed between him and his enemies Elisha did not feel it necessary even to escape. The horses and chariots of the Syrians were no nearer to the man of God than were the heavenly hosts. The military of heaven greatly exceeded that of the Syrians. Elisha had the spiritual vision to discern them. That army was invincible. The event which overwhelmed the servant inspired Elisha with hope and heroism. The very same means the enemy used to distress and terrify Elisha's servant God used to defend and encourage him. It needed just the opening of the eyes to reveal to the young man agencies unseen and unsuspected before. While the servant had his eyes upon the lines of the Syrian troops who were sent to capture his master, he could see nothing beyond the sphere of sense. Elisha did not argue. He encouraged faith and offered prayer. Surveying with the look of spiritual insight the unmeasurable forces of the living God, Elisha answered cheerfully, "Fear not." He then prayed that the young man might be given power to see. Elisha admitted human weakness, but he apprehended divine strength. His faith brought the realization of actual facts, that God's presence was with him. His body-guard was more than a match for the Syrian host. Elisha was a man with a great soul of love standing upon the omnipotence of his faith to defy kings and all their employed hosts. His faith and confidence outshone the gloom about him and made him calm in the face of danger.

II. Led to the confusion of enemies. Benhadad had abundant reason to know that Israel was under divine protection and guidance, and that craft and cunning were of no avail against the wisdom which comes from above. He should have known that it was God against whom he was contending and not his prophet only, and that it would be impossible to outwit the Source of wisdom, the Giver of all understanding. Benhadad might have reflected that if all his plans had been known to Elisha, this plan to capture him at Dothan would also be known and that Elisha would surely escape his malignant design. When therefore the Syrians approached to take Elisha, their movements became aimless. Prayer was the only means at Elisha's command. It served his best ends in behalf of his servant and his enemies. The young man's eyes were opened to see that deliverance was at hand. The Syrians' eyes were closed to prevent violence against God's helpless ones, and opened to see their true condition. Elisha did not exult in his triumph over his enemies. He did not take advantage of their helplessness. His act of kindness turned away their wrath. The entertainment and dismissal of the troops were a deep mortification to them. The Syrians were to learn that Israel's God could save from the greatest distresses and that no craft or skill could avail against him and also that he was a merciful God toward them. The king of Israel was to learn once more to recognize the faithfulness and might of Jehovah and to be convinced that there was a prophet in Israel. Their repeated deliverances through Elisha were to teach Israel that their victories were due to divine help. Though they had provoked the divine displeasure by their idolatries and backslidings, he mercifully helped and forewarned them of coming danger, and furnished them many proofs that he was the Lord of all the earth.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Sight, and then insight (v. 17). The world has sight, but lacks insight. The servant could see the hosts of the Syrians, but could not see the horses and chariots of fire. The world can see the road to Dothan, but can not see the bodyguard encamped round about Elisha. The world could see the throne of Egypt, but could not see the reward of the righteous. Elisha's servant did not have to be blinded to see the hosts of God. Sight and insight are not opposed to each other. To become blind to the unseen forces is always the beginning of pessimism. Insight always keeps in mind that the world we see is not the only one in which we live. When Dr. Judson was at Rangoon for the last time, endeavoring to gain a footing for the gospel, he heard one day that the savage Burman magistrate had stationed guards with orders to seize every native seen coming out of the house of the teacher. Mrs. Judson says, "I shall never forget the expression of my husband's face, as, though really piercing the invisible, when he exclaimed, 'I tell you, if we had the power to see them, the air about us is thick with contending spirits, the good and the bad, striving for the mastery.'"

The ministry of angels (Golden Text). Daniel tells us that these spiritual intelligences stand before the Ancient of days by thousand thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand (Dan. 7:10). Paul calls them an innumerable company (Heb. 12:22). It was an angel that warned Joseph to depart into Egypt. Rev. Levi White tells of praying with a very dissolute woman whom he urged to seek the Lord. About two months afterward, in company with a brother minister, he visited her again. He says, "As we entered the house we were both powerfully impressed with the presence of God. So sensible were we that a mighty change had been wrought there, that I turned to my friend and said, 'Something has happened. This place is like heaven.' The woman we saw two months before was so changed that neither of us would have recognized her. As I approached her bed, she extended her hand with a smile. 'Oh, I am so glad to see you. How changed I am! When you called before I had given up all hope of ever being saved. I was so wicked. Brutes had helped me down and then forsaken me. I could not look at you. To hide my shame I covered my face. Then when you sang that beautiful song, I took hope. The following night I resolved that I would never close my eyes in sleep until Jesus saved me. I prayed, confessed and begged Jesus to blot out my dark record of sin, to have mercy on my sinful soul. I prayed until four in the morning, when, being utterly exhausted, I sank to sleep. I soon awoke singing. A stream of light as large as a rainbow shone directly in my face. I thought the sun was up and its rays were shining through a crevice in the roof. I moved a little to get out of its light, but it was still there. Then I looked up and, oh, what a sight! That stream of light shone up into the skies and all along that blaze of glory I saw angels. They were carrying flowers and at the top I saw Jesus as plainly as I see you now. He was looking down at me with such a sweet smile on his face. Oh, such a sight! Then I shouted and shouted and called Jesus to come and take me.' Shortly after, this prayer was answered." God has unnumbered ways in which to reveal his love. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The Lord takes care of his children.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

ELISHA { HELPING ISRAEL / SOUGHT BY SYRIANS / DIVINELY PROTECTED

A beginning. Review the events in Elisha's life already studied and tell the story of his causing the ax to float. The increase in the number of the "sons of the prophets" is worthy of notice. From the fact that the ax was borrowed, and the man who was using it was troubled at its loss on that account, may be drawn a lesson upon the care of the property of others. Keep in mind throughout the lesson the thought that God is interested in all we say and do, and that he is constantly taking care of us. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the shelter and clothing provided are all the gift of God, our heavenly Father.

Elisha's protection. The account of the bands of Syrians trying to entrap and overcome the army of Israel is interesting. Make it vivid by describing the plans of the Syrians to conceal themselves in certain places so as to attack the men of Israel at unawares, and every time they did it, the men of Israel learned the secret plans of the Syrians and escaped. Tell how Elisha learned beforehand what the Syrians intended to do. The king of Syria thought there must be a traitor in his army who told the secrets to Israel, but he was mistaken.

Sought by Syrians. Tell the children the reason why the king of Syria was so eager to capture Elisha, and how useless it was to try to take him when the Lord revealed to him what was going on in the Syrian army. Refer to the history of Elijah when his enemy was trying to capture him, and how he called down fire from heaven twice to destroy two different companies of men, and thus escaped. Tell the great preparation Benhadad made in his effort to arrest one man, sending a host of men with horses and chariots to surround by night the place where Elisha was, so that he might not escape. Why was Elisha's servant afraid?

Elisha was protected. Explain why the prophet had no fear. There was a marked difference between Elisha and his servant in this respect. Call attention to the difference between the forces on Elisha's side and those on the side of Syria. Draw a line and on one side write at the top "Israel," and on the other "Syria," and under "Israel" write "Elisha and his servant," "a host of horses and chariots of fire," "Elisha's prayer and the answer" and "victory;" under "Syria" write "a great host," "a night march," "blindness" and "defeat." Refer to Daniel's escape from the den of lions, and the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace. Tell the children the victories they may gain. The Syrian army undertook to make a prisoner of one man, and that man took the entire army prisoners. It must have been an interesting sight to see the prophet and his servant leading the Syrian army twelve miles, and taking them straight into the city of Samaria, the capital of the kingdom of Israel.

LESSON V

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Oct. 25.—The boy Joash crowned king.—2 Kings 11: 1-12. Tu.—Worship reformed.—2 Kings 11: 13-20. Wed.—The boy Moses.—Exod. 2: 1-10. Th.—The boy Samuel.—1 Sam. 3: 1-14. Fr.—Advice to boys.—Prov. 4: 10-27. Sat.—The child Jesus.—Luke 2: 22-39. Su.—The boy Jesus.—Luke 2: 41-52.

The Boy Joash Crowned King.—2 Kings 11: 1-20. Print 11: 4-12.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 11, 12)

SUPT.—4 And the seventh year Je-hoi'a-da sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the Lord, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the Lord, and shewed them the king's son.

School.—5 And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house;

6 And a third part shall be at the gate of Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down.

7 And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the Lord about the king.

8 And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in.

9 And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Je-hoi'a-da the priest commanded; and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Je-hoi'a-da the priest.

10 And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give king Da'vid spears and shields, that were in the temple of the Lord.

11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar and the temple.

12 And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

*AMERICAN REVISION

4 And in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the captains over hundreds of the Carites and of the guard, and brought them to him into the house of Jehovah; and he made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of Jehovah, and showed them the king's son. 5 And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do: a third part of you, that come in on the sabbath, shall be keepers of the watch of the king's house; 6 and a third part shall be at the gate Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, and be a barrier. 7 And the two companies of you, even all that go forth on the sabbath, shall keep the watch of the house of Jehovah about the king. 8 And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and he that cometh within the ranks, let him be slain: and be ye with the king when he goeth out, and when he cometh in.

9 And the captains over hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded; and they took every man his men, those that were to come in on the sabbath, with those that were to go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. 10 And the priest delivered to the captains over hundreds the spears and shields that had been king David's, which were in the house of Jehovah. 11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, along by the altar and the house, by the king round about. 12 Then he brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, Long live the king.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish. Prov. 14: 11.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**God blesses and honors those who honor him.**

TOPIC.—**Revolution in Judah.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Joash preserved. II. Joash made king. III. Athaliah slain. IV. True worship restored.**

TIME.—**B. C. 878.**

PLACE.—**Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—For several weeks our lessons have had to do with the history of the prophets Elijah and Elisha and their connection with the kingdom of Israel. We study to-day an important event in the history of the kingdom of Judah. Following Asa's reign of forty-one years Jehoshaphat reigned well during the twenty-five years that he occupied the throne. His son Jehoram reigned eight years and he was wicked, going in the ways of the kings of Israel. His son Ahaziah reigned one year. He followed the evil counsel of his mother Athaliah and did wickedly. There was a disposition in Judah to serve the Lord, and when a strong leader arose who labored for the moral and spiritual good of the nation, there was a rallying to his support and to turn to the living God. The study of Joash reveals to us a boy with a great opportunity, and presents to us the thought of the great opportunities that come to the young to-day, and how those opportunities can be best improved.

COMMENTARY.—I. JOASH PRESERVED (vs. 1-3). Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel and was possessed of the same cruel and wicked disposition that had characterized her mother. Jehoshaphat erred greatly when he married his son Jehoram to this woman. During the year that her son Ahaziah reigned, she dictated the kind of administration to be given the kingdom. At his death she was not content to give way to a successor, but undertook to make herself secure in the possession of the throne by putting to death all who might claim heirship to the throne, including her own grandchildren. Ahaziah's sister, half-sister according to Josephus, preserved the life of the infant Joash, Ahaziah's youngest child, by hiding him in a room in the palace where beds were stored when not in use. Jehosheba was the wife of Jehoiada, the priest, hence was able to keep the child hidden in the chambers of the house of the Lord to which she had access. During the seven years of Athaliah's usurpation of the throne of Judah, Joash was carefully and successfully hidden

from his cruel grandmother. The Lord's hand was signally seen in his preservation, for there was a great work for him to do for the nation.

II. JOASH MADE KING (vs. 4-12). **4. the seventh year**—The seventh year of the life of Joash. **rulers over hundreds**—These were officers in Judah's army. Their names are given in 2 Chron. 23:1-3, where it is stated that Jehoiada, the priest, assembled the Levites and chief fathers of the nation at Jerusalem. **made a covenant with them**—Jehoiada gained the confidence and support of the people before he disclosed to them his purpose to depose Athaliah, who was reigning without right, and place Joash, the rightful sovereign, upon the throne. Jehoiada made a covenant with them by taking their solemn promise to cooperate with him in this plan. **shewed them the king's son**—It could not have been known that a son of Ahaziah was alive, and it was a revelation to the assembled leaders of Judah to have Joash brought into one of the chambers of the house of the Lord where they were assembled. The sight of this boy who had a right to the throne and who had been providentially preserved from death could not fail to arouse the patriotism of the people of Judah.

5. this is the thing that ye shall do—Jehoiada had his plans of procedure clearly made and was prepared to give directions to the people. **you that enter in on the sabbath**—The priests and Levites served by courses, one week at a time, and entered upon their duties on the Sabbath. **watch of the king's house**—A third part of those coming in to perform service were to keep guard at the royal palace, so that no trouble could arise from that source. **6. gate of Sur**—This gate is not elsewhere mentioned, hence its location is not known. It was a point evidently where opposition to Jehoiada's plan might arise. **at the gate behind the guard**—Reference is made to the royal guards. Jehoiada placed men here for the purpose of taking care of these guards if they should attempt to prevent the coronation of Joash. **7. you that go forth on the sabbath**—In planning that the deposition of Athaliah should take place on the Sabbath Jehoiada could make use both of those who were coming in to take up their week's duties and also of those who were just finishing, and as the Sabbath was the day of larger assemblies of people at the temple, there would be no suspicion on Athaliah's part of what was taking place. **keep the watch of the house of the Lord**—While three companies were keeping watch at the royal palace, other companies were guarding the boy Joash at the temple.

8. compass the king round about—If Athaliah or any of her supporters should know that Joash was alive and an attempt was being made to place him on the throne, every effort would be made to take his life. **ranges**—Ranks. **let him be slain**—Whoever should break through the guards placed by Jehoiada would be considered a supporter of Athaliah. **9. did according to all things**—Jehoiada found in his associates faithful men who believed that right should prevail in the nation. **10. king David's spears and shields**—The weapons that David had taken from his defeated enemies had been placed in some of the chambers of the temple as memorials of his victories. **11. the guard stood....round about the king**—The great altar stood in front of the porch of the temple, and the guard extended from the northeast corner of the temple to the altar and from the altar to the southeast corner of the temple, enclosing a triangular area. **12. he brought forth the king's son**—Jehoiada led out before the people the boy Joash who had never appeared publicly until that day. It was a bold step, but a righteous one. The position of Joash was by one of the pillars, probably Jachin or Boaz, the corner pillars of the porch, the place where the kings were crowned (v. 14). **put the crown upon him**—Jehoiada, the priest, placed the crown upon Joash's head. He was the one who officiated upon this occasion. **gave him the testimony**—This was the law of Moses. Joash was to know God's word and was to rule his people in harmony with it. **anointed him**—The priest anointed him for kingship. The anointing oil was probably the same as that used for consecrating Levites to the priesthood. **they clapped their hands**—In token of their joy over the coronation of Joash as king, the people clapped their hands. It was a symbol of pleasure and approbation. **God save the king**—"Long live the king."—*R. V.* This expression was used when Saul was made king of Israel (1 Sam. 10:24).

III. ATHALIAH SLAIN (vs. 13-16). Athaliah's sin was to be visited upon her own head. She had put to death many that she might reign, and now when right and justice were to triumph she must pay the penalty. She was attracted by the shouting of the people and hastened from the royal palace up the beautiful approach to the house of the Lord. The sight that met her eyes of a boy, her own grandson, wearing the crown amid the acclamations of the people, should have made her tremble and say that justice was at last being done, but she most inconsistently cried, "Treason." She had been guilty of treason for seven years. Athaliah was slain as a punishment for her crimes and thus ended the career of a woman not unlike the cruel and wicked Jezebel, her mother. Although she had succeeded in holding the reins of government for years, retribution was all the time in store for her, and at last she received her just deserts for her terrible sins. Her entire course was one of violence.

IV. TRUE WORSHIP RESTORED (vs. 17-20). The worship of Baal had become firmly fixed in Jerusalem through the influence of Athaliah. A temple of Baal had been built, possibly not far from the house of the Lord. The sons of Athaliah had broken into the Lord's house and had taken the things that were dedicated to Jehovah and placed them in the house of Baal. Jehoiada made a covenant between the king and the people and the Lord that they would be the Lord's people. In carrying out this covenant they broke down the temple of Baal and destroyed its contents. They put to death Mattan, the priest of Baal, and thus put away Baal-worship. The way was now open for the renewal of the worship of Jehovah. The officers with Jehoiada took Joash from the temple and escorted him to the royal palace and placed him on the throne. This great change was made amid the rejoicings of the people. There was no disturbance in the city, for public sentiment was with Jehoiada in the course he pursued.

QUESTIONS.—Who was king of Judah after Jehoshaphat before Athaliah usurped the throne? Who was Athaliah? What course did she take to obtain the kingdom? Who was Jehosheba? What praiseworthy act did she perform? Who was Jehoiada? What plan did he propose and execute? How old was Joash when he began to reign? Into what covenant did the king and people enter? How was Baal-worship destroyed?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The ministry of Elijah and that of Elisha were closely connected with the history of Israel. 2. The kings of Israel between Ahab and Jehu. 3. The kings of Judah from Asa to Joash. 4. The religious condition of Israel under Jehu. 5. The religious condition of Judah.

II. Theme.—The triumph of right.

III. Unrighteousness in high places.—1. Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. 2. The unholy alliance between the house of Jehoshaphat and that of Ahab. 3. Athaliah's influence in Judah. 4. Her thirst for power led her to the commission of atrocious crimes. 5. Her reign was marked by the advance of Baal-worship. 6. Apparently she was to be queen for years.

IV. Righteousness triumphant.—1. God had his eye upon the nation and his hand upon some of the people. 2. Jehosheba's part in the downfall of Athaliah. 3. Her courage and faithfulness. 4. Jehoiada was God's man for the hour. 5. His knowledge of the views of the people regarding Athaliah. 6. His plans perfected. 7. The success of the revolution. 8. Joash crowned. 9. Led in triumph to the royal palace.

V. The effects of the triumph of right.—1. The rejoicing of the people. 2. The covenant of Judah to be the Lord's people. 3. The principles of righteousness put in operation. (1) In the destruction of the temple of Baal and Baal-worship. (2) In the establishment of true worship. 4. The opportunity before the boy king. 5. The responsibility upon Jehoiada.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Revolution in Judah.**

I. Revealed an overruling providence.
II. Discovered human instrumentality.
III. Established true religious reform.

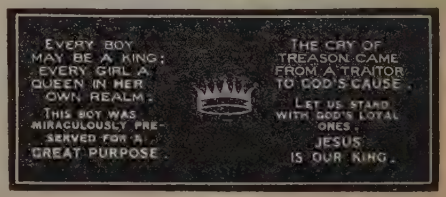
I. Revealed an overruling providence. The kingdom of Judah lost its king at the same time and by the same hand that Israel did. The transaction with which this lesson is connected belongs to that series of events which were involved with the destruction of the house of Ahab. Among those who were slain in the fierce onslaught of Jehu was Ahaziah, king of Judah and son of Athaliah. God had assured David of the continuance of his family. It was almost extinguished by the barbarous malice of Athaliah, the queen mother. Her husband, Jehoram, had slain all the sons of King Jehoshaphat. The Arabians had slain all Jehoram's sons except Ahaziah. Jehu had slain all their sons including Ahaziah. Following all this, Athaliah destroyed all that were left of the seed royal except the infant Joash. She did it from revenge and rage against the God of Israel. The house of Ahab being cut off utterly, with her son Ahaziah among the rest, she resolved, as if in reprisal, to destroy the house of David and cut off his line in defiance of God's promise to perpetuate it, that she might set up a throne for herself on the ruins of it. Nothing could more clearly reveal the wicked disposition of Athaliah than the means by which she raised herself to the throne. She was another Jezebel in disposition—a fierce, ambitious, utterly unscrupulous woman, powerful, unsparing and remorseless. Both women were idolaters and haters of Jehovah. The path of each was marked by violence, bloodshed and political convulsion. Their thirst for dominion extinguished all natural affection. The elevation of Joash to the throne of Judah had great importance in the history of redemption inasmuch as God's guidance and protection of the house of David appeared in it.

II. Discovered human instrumentality. God's promise to David was bound up in one life, yet it did not fail. It was a special providence that Joram married his daughter to Jehoiada, a godly priest. His interest in the temple gave Jehosheba opportunity to preserve the life of the infant Joash. Her interest in the royal family gave Jehoiada an opportunity to set Joash on the throne, and thus overthrow the wicked power of Athaliah. When the time for action came Jehoiada made his arrangements with the most consummate skill. It devolved upon him to rescue church and state alike from peril and to counterwork the wicked schemes of a bold and unscrupulous enemy. When the child was of suitable age, and when Athaliah had lost the affections of all classes of her subjects, Jehoiada organized a revolution with the greatest prudence and caution. He set to work to detach Athaliah's supporters from her cause by peaceful methods of persuasion. While trusting in God Jehoiada took every precaution. The people were of one mind and Athaliah was left in her false security without a single friend to warn her of her danger. It was an indication of extraordinary prudence and political wisdom to be able to effect a complete revolution with the loss of but two lives.

III. Established true religious reform. Jehoiada was a faithful priest under very trying circumstances. His opportunity for distinction arose from the difficult circumstances in which he was placed. At the peril of his life he had preserved one of the royal family. He did not rebel against Athaliah for rebellion's sake. He did not end her reign because of any antipathy to governments. He believed in doing his utmost to overthrow even the power of the reigning queen when that power was wickedly obtained and exercised in a way dishonoring to God, and injurious to the interests of the nation. Athaliah's life-work was one of destruction. Jehosheba's work was that of preservation. Jehoiada's work was both destroying and preserving. Aiming at nothing for himself Jehoiada's first thought was for the honor of God. He therefore renewed the Mosaic covenant. His second thought was for the welfare of his country. He therefore caused the king and people mutually to covenant together. His further thought was for the honor of true religion. Consequently he destroyed the temple of Baal and inaugurated the true worship of Jehovah. True worship and true government constituted the standard he raised. "All the people rejoiced" in the signal victory.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Save the young kings (v. 8). History is filled with the accounts of young kings put to death, as were the young princes of England, Edward V and his brother Richard. But this is an account of the systematic and extensive measures taken to save a young king. We have them all about us. In our homes, in the Sabbath-school, in the community, there are prospective kings and queens. Dr. Talmage said, "This afternoon, in your Sabbath-school class, there will be a prince of God—some Cromwell to dissolve a parliament, some Beethoven to touch the world's harp-strings, some John Howard to pour fresh air into the lazaretto, some Florence Nightingale to bandage the battle wounds, some Miss Dix to soothe the crazed brain, some David Brainerd to change the Indian's war-whoop to a Sabbath song, some John Wesley to marshal three fourths of Christendom, some John Knox to make queens turn pale, some Joash to demolish idolatry and strike for the kingdom of heaven. There are sleeping in your cradles by night, there are playing in your nurseries by day, imperial souls waiting for dominion, and whichever side the cradle they get out will decide the destiny of empires."

The trophies of victory. "And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, that were in the temple of the Lord" (v. 10). It was customary among the ancients for a warrior, when he had vanquished an enemy in battle, to take away his spear and armor, as trophies. These would be taken and preserved as proofs of his courage. As David was a mighty warrior, there were many of these proofs of his prowess stored away in the temple. So, the Captain of our salvation has led captivity captive and given gifts unto men. He has hung up many shields and spears in the house of the Lord, the use of which will often enable us to overcome our foes. One of these is the sword of the Spirit. With it he turned the onslaughts of Satan in the wilderness of the temptation into a complete rout. Then, there is the breastplate of righteousness; taking it, we shall be secure in the day of judgment. Then, there is the helmet of salvation; using it, we shall be safe from the fiery darts of the wicked one. Then, hanging above all the rest, is the shield of faith; with this, we can overcome all difficulties and become more than conquerors. In another sense the temple is filled with the trophies our Christ has won from Satan's kingdom. Spurgeon says, "The King of kings hath led captivity captive, and all the crowns of this prince of the power of the air are hung up as trophies. Broken are their spears: their shields all battered and vilely cast away, hung up as memorials of what Christ hath done. Death, too, the last enemy,—Christ hath taken spoils from him when he rose again himself from his prison-house, and ascended on high, leading captivity captive. Note the castle of the human heart. When we look round the temple and see the spears and shields hung up, we say, 'Who did those spears and shields belong to?' One says, 'Why, that is the spear and the shield of John Newton, the old blasphemer!' Glory be to God, Christ conquered him. Whose shield and spears are those? Why, they are the shield and spears of John Bunyan, the blasphemer of the village green. God's mercy conquered him. What will heaven be when all of us shall be trophies of his power to save!" G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The Lord has a work for every one of us.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

The boy Joash { In danger / Saved from death / Made king

KINGS AND VICTORS

Athaliah's cruelty. Refer briefly to Ahab and Jezebel who were cruel and wicked. Athaliah was their daughter. Compare the influence of a good, Christian home with that of a home where the parents are godless and wicked. Athaliah was brought up under wicked influences and she was wicked herself. Her husband was Jehoram, one of the kings of Judah, and her son Ahaziah reigned for a year. She greatly desired to be queen, but Ahaziah's children, who were her own grandchildren, were in the way, that is, one of them would naturally come to the throne. No one in the class has a grandmother who would do such a thing as to kill her grandchildren, so that she might take what rightfully belonged to them. Athaliah was wicked enough to kill every one who was in her way to the throne, and she believed she had slain them all.

Joash's life saved. Joash was just a baby when Athaliah did those wicked things and she would have killed him also, if it had not been that his aunt Jehosheba took him and his nurse and hid them in a room where they were not found, and she kept Joash hidden for six years. Recall the story of Moses and his preservation from death. If Athaliah had known what Jehosheba had done, she would have been likely to slay both her and Joash if she could. The Lord had a work for this boy to do, and he kept him from being slain. Jehosheba was a good woman to risk her own life to save the boy Joash.

A boy made king. Tell why Jehoiada, the priest, believed that Athaliah ought not to be queen any longer. She had no right to be in that position. She was not a good woman and could not be a good queen. She was leading the people further and further from the true God. Tell the story of the crowning of Joash king. Describe the guards that were placed about the royal palace and those that were around the temple. The boy Joash was only seven years old. He had been carefully trained. Note how the people clapped their hands when he was made king of Judah. Jehoiada was his teacher and guide. Tell of the reforms that were begun right away. Baal-worship was destroyed. We shall learn more about Joash in the lesson for next week.

Kings and victors. No one in the class is likely to be a king or a queen to sit upon a throne here on earth. God speaks in the Bible about his children in the next world, that they will be kings and priests to himself. We may be victors here over the things that are evil. We may conquer evil habits, disobedience, bad words and all sin through Jesus who can save us from them all. We may be the children of the great King, by giving ourselves to him and trusting him.

LESSON VI

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Nov. 1.—Joash repairs the temple.—2 Kings 12: 4-15. Tu.—The temple built.—1 Kings 8: 12-21. Wed.—The temple dishonored.—2 Kings 16: 10-18. Th.—The temple cleansed.—2 Chron. 29: 1-11. Fr.—The temple rebuilt.—Haggai 1: 7-15. Sat.—The temple completed and dedicated.—Ezra 6: 6-18. Su.—Jesus cleanses the temple.—Matt. 21: 12-17.

Joash Repairs the Temple.—2 Kings 11: 21–12: 16. Print 12: 4-15.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verse, 9)

SUPT.—4 And Je-ho'ash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the Lord, even the money of every one that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the Lord,

School.—5 Let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found.

6 But it was so, that in the three and twentieth year of king Je-ho'ash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.

7 Then king Je-ho'ash called for Je-hoi'a-da the priest, and the other priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no more money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.

8 And the priests consented to receive no more money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house.

9 But Je-hoi'a-da the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the Lord: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the Lord.

10 And it was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the Lord.

11 And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the Lord: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the Lord,

12 And to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the Lord, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it.

13 Howbeit there were not made for the house of the Lord bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of the Lord:

14 But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the Lord.

15 Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully.

*AMERICAN REVISION

4 And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the hallowed things that is brought into the house of Jehovah, in current money, the money of the persons for whom each man is rated, and all the money that it cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of Jehovah, 5 let the priests take it to them, every man from his acquaintance; and they shall repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found. 6 But it was so, that in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house. 7 Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and for the other priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore take no more money from your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house. 8 And the priests consented that they should take no more money from the people, neither repair the breaches of the house.

9 But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of Jehovah: and the priests that kept the threshold put therein all the money that was brought into the house of Jehovah. 10 And it was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags and counted the money that was found in the house of Jehovah. 11 And they gave the money that was weighed out into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of Jehovah: and they paid it out to the carpenters and the builders, that wrought upon the house of Jehovah, 12 and to the masons and the hewers of stone, and for buying timber and hewn stone to repair the breaches of the house of Jehovah, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it. 13 But there were not made for the house of Jehovah cups of silver, snuffers, basins, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of Jehovah; 14 for they gave that to them that did the work, and repaired therewith the house of Jehovah. 15 Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to give to them that did the work; for they dealt faithfully.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. 9: 7.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**God's work demands our best efforts.**

TOPIC.—**Foundation reform.**

OUTLINE.—**I. The reign of Joash. II. A fruitless effort to repair the temple. III. Generous offerings. IV. God's house repaired.**

TIME.—**The reign of Joash B. C. 878-838.**

PLACE.—**Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—The reign of the boy Joash began under favorable conditions. The people received him cordially. He had in the priest Jehoiada a good and wise counselor. There was need of much work about the temple, which had fallen into decay because of neglect. The work of Joash seems to have principally been to restore the worship of Jehovah and to repair his house. It is not pleasant to consider the close of this king's reign. We are pained at his course in yielding to those who introduced Baal-worship again and in authorizing the stoning of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, for testifying against the idolatry of Judah, and at his death at the hands of assassins. The lesson to-day gives us an example of devotion to God's work, and teaches all of us the duty of properly caring for the house of the Lord.

COMMENTARY.—I. THE REIGN OF JOASH (11: 21–12: 3). Joash was the youngest king to ascend the throne of Judah. Another king, Josiah, began to reign at the age of eight years, while

Joash was only seven. Jehoiada, the priest, who was instrumental in placing Joash on the throne, deposing Athaliah, was in fact the head of the government during the earlier years of the king's reign. Under his guidance Joash did what was "right in the sight of the Lord," yet the "high places were not taken away" (v. 3). Altars and shrines on high hills for the worship of Jehovah had been used before the dedication of the temple, and they were still considered sacred. The worship there performed was not necessarily idolatrous, for sacrifices were offered to the true God, but there was a decided tendency toward idolatry in such worship. The heathen chose high places for the worship of their deities. Jerusalem was designed to be the true center of worship. Joash was a good king while Jehoiada lived.

II. A FRUITLESS EFFORT TO REPAIR THE TEMPLE (vs. 4-8). **4. Jehoash**—This is another form of Joash (ch. 11:2; 2 Chron. 22:11). **said to the priests**—Joash had probably reached young manhood when he gave the order here recorded. The king had supreme authority and had a right to command the priests. The matter of raising money for religious purposes was in the hands of the priests. **all the money of the dedicated things**—This includes whatever was devoted to sacred uses. Money was not coined at that time, but the gold and silver were valued according to their weight. The latter clauses of this verse indicate the three sources of revenue for the support of the religious system among the Jews. **the money of every one that passeth the account**—Rather, "that passeth the numbering," as in R. V., margin. This was the half-shekel required of all the men from twenty years old and upward, excepting old men and the Levites (Exod. 30:12-16; Num. 1:42, 45, 47), and was equivalent to about thirty-two cents. **the money that every man is set at**—The amount paid into the treasury of the temple in connection with special vows and estimated according to Lev. 27:1-8. **cometh into any man's heart**—Free-will offerings. **5. every man of his acquaintance**—From this verse and from 2 Chron. 24:5 it seems clear that the priests and Levites were directed to go throughout Judah collecting money for repairing the temple. **repair the breaches of the house**—The temple had been the home of Joash in his childhood, and he had opportunity to observe its condition. It had been neglected for years, and had been broken up by the sons of Athaliah, who took from it the sacred things and devoted them to idolatrous uses (2 Chron. 24:7).

6. the three and twentieth year—Joash was now thirty years old. Some years had elapsed since he first gave orders to the priests to collect money and repair the temple, but the repairs had not been made. The amount collected was probably not large owing to the prevalence of idolatry, and all that was raised was used for the support of the priests and the maintenance of the temple service. Perhaps the priests did not go at the task of collecting money with much energy. **7. called for Jehoiada**—Jehoiada was the high priest and upon him rested the responsibility of carrying out the king's orders. He must have been about one hundred years old when Joash became king, for he died during his reign at the age of one hundred thirty. His extreme old age may have rendered him in a measure indifferent or incapable of performing the service imposed upon him. **receive no more**—The king relieved the priests of further authority and responsibility in connection with raising money to repair the temple. They were to hand over to others whatever they had for the purpose. **8. consented**—The work of the priests in connection with the repairing of the temple was at an end. The first effort of Joash to accomplish this necessary and praiseworthy task was a failure.

III. GENEROUS OFFERINGS (vs. 9, 10). **9. took a chest**—This was done by Jehoiada "at the king's commandment" (2 Chron. 24:8). The chest with a hole bored in the lid to admit the money was the receptacle for the special repair fund. The contributions went through the hands of the priests and there is no intimation that they had acted dishonestly at any time. **brought into the house of the Lord**—It was expected that the people would give more when the collection was appointed for the special purpose of repairing the temple, than when they were to give the legal and voluntary payments only to the priests, whereby no giver knew how much of it might be applied for the building.—*Keil.* **10. much money in the chest**—People are more free to give when they are assured that the cause is worthy, and their gifts are for a specific purpose, and the money will be devoted strictly to that object. **told the money**—"Counted the money."—*R. V.*

IV. GOD'S HOUSE REPAIRED (vs. 11-16). **11. into the hands**—A careful system was followed in the prosecution of the enterprise. The money was handed over by those in authority to the contractors who were entrusted with making the repairs. **they laid it out**—"Paid it out."—*R. V.* **12. to buy timber and hewed stone**—The expressions in this and the preceding verses indicate to what extent the temple had fallen into decay in the one hundred fifty years since it was built. **13. there were not made for the house of the Lord,** etc.—In the parallel account in 2 Chron. 24, it is stated that vessels were made for the service of the house of the Lord, but not until after the temple had been repaired, and the surplus was used for that purpose. **14. gave that to the workmen**—The repairing of the house of the Lord was not hindered by a lack of funds, for the money was placed at the disposal of the workmen until the repairs were completed. It is a desolate sight to see the house of God going to ruin, and it is an encouraging sight to see the people taking a hearty interest in keeping it in good repair. "The labors of all, from the king to the humblest carpenter, were essential to the success of the great undertaking. It is not for any worker in the Lord's cause to say he has of himself done any good thing. At the best he is only one of the many agents in the perfecting of God's plans."—*Trumbull.* **15. dealt faithfully**—Such men were entrusted with this important work as were conscientious, active and had the welfare of the cause of God at heart. **16.** The money that was brought to the temple as a trespass offering or a sin offering (Lev. 5:15-19; 7:7; Num. 18:9) belonged to the priests, and was not used in repairing the house of the Lord.

QUESTIONS.—How old was Joash when he was made king? What was his character? Who was the high priest and what influence did he have over the young king? Who decided that the temple must be repaired? How long had it been since the temple was built? What was the first plan for raising the needed funds? What ways of raising money are mentioned in verse 4? What was the second plan for raising money? Why was this more successful? How was the money counted? How paid out? What practical truths are taught in this lesson?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The favorable beginning of the reign of Joash. 2. The relation of Joash to Jehoiada. (1) The king was Jehoiada's wife's nephew. (2) Jehoiada was the high priest and Joash's adviser. 3. The length of Joash's reign.

II. THEME.—What needs doing can be done.

III. AN URGENT NEED.—1. The influence of the wicked Athaliah was manifest. 2. The house of the Lord had fallen into decay through neglect. 3. The continued existence of shrines in the high places. 4. The need for faithful, devoted men. 5. A study of Joash. (1) Young. (2) Under the good influences of Jehosheba and Jehoiada. (3) A desire for the reformation of the nation. (4) His weakness shown by his fall after the death of Jehoiada. 6. A study of Jehoiada. (1) A pious, faithful man. (2) His opportunity. The training of a king. 7. Both the king and the high priest saw the need of a reformation.

IV. AN ATTEMPT AND A FAILURE.—1. The priests were the most natural agents through whom to accomplish the reform. 2. The three sources of revenue for the temple service. 3. The delay of several years in getting at the work. 4. The failure was due to the inactivity of the priests and to the indefiniteness of the plan. 5. The priests were not ready to use for repairing the temple what seemed necessary for their support.

V. A GREAT SUCCESS.—1. Because one plan failed it was not necessary to suppose that success was impossible. 2. The advantages of the second plan over the first. (1) There was a specific object that invited contributions. (2) The repair fund was wholly separate from the moneys contributed for the temple service. (3) The people had confidence that the funds would be wisely appropriated. 3. The need of exercising great care in the use of funds raised for religious or charitable purposes. 4. The funds counted and properly placed. 5. The faithfulness of the workmen. 6. The advantage of cooperation. All worked together.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**Foundational reform.**

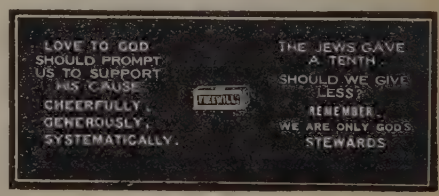
I. The mission and work of Joash.
II. The result of godly preparation.

I. The mission and work of Joash. The temple at Jerusalem had been the nursery and sanctuary of Joash when a child in hiding from the cruel Athaliah, and he was zealous for its honor. He signalized his otherwise ordinary career by laying this matter much to heart and taking it thoroughly in hand. He counseled Jehoiada. He incited the hesitating priests. He called forth the energy of the people. He would not let any slackness, on the part of those who should have been eager and diligent, constitute any serious hindrance. The project was becoming and right. It was Judah's duty to protect and preserve the temple. It had suffered mutilation at the hands of Athaliah in order to construct the temple of Baal. Joash gave ample time for the successful working of his first plan which was proposed at the beginning of his reign. The general indifference to the old Jewish system of worship, due to the corruption of idolatry, caused much lethargy on the part of the people, which could be broken up only by some extraordinary method. There was widespread dissatisfaction with the course pursued by the priests. Having abandoned the first plan, the king quickly unfolded his second one, which was as simple as it was effective. The persistent and successful efforts of Joash to accomplish an object which was for the honor of true religion and which had not engaged the cooperation of the priesthood proved him worthy of true commendation. Royal proclamation was made of the new plan throughout the land. In ordaining that the temple should be repaired, Joash directed how the funds for the work were to be obtained. The unique plan of using a chest was an advantage to the priests as well as to the people. It put the order, as a whole, above suspicion and reproach. Every piece of money was strictly accounted for. The expenditure was as noteworthy as the gathering. Following up the precautions to inspire confidence, was the appointment of men to superintend the work, who could be implicitly trusted. His plans of gathering and expending the money set Joash in a favorable light. He should have full credit for the one luminous work of his whole reign, the repair of the temple. It affords a remarkable instance of the cheerful giving of a voluntary offering.

II. The result of godly preparation. Heredity did much against the formation of a strong character in Joash. His environment was his strong uplift. He had godly instruction. He had a good counselor. He had an excellent opportunity. He was the creature of Providence, the child of divine care and watchful love. The beginning of his life was conspicuous for the greatness and worthiness of its zeal. He enjoyed the sustaining help of the best and most faithful of friends in the godly priest Jehoiada. To him he owed his life in his infancy. To him he owed his instruction in boyhood. To him he was indebted for counsel in his manhood. Jehoiada sustained the hand of Joash in his work of repairing the temple. He did much to maintain the worship of God in the land against all reactionary influences, whether at court or among the princes or with the people. Few men have rendered such distinguished service to their country as did Jehoiada. It required no small heroism to stand forth as a servant of Jehovah in the days of Ahaziah and Athaliah. To him the nation owed the preservation of its king, its throne, its religion and its temple. He was the man best fitted to occupy the throne of Judah and therefore the best fitted to direct the boy king whose life he had guarded to the end, that he might perpetuate the family of David upon the throne of Judah. Jehoiada furnished an example of influence exercised for good. He possessed three elements of success: power arising from his priestly office, piety, which gave him the principles on which to discharge his mission, and courage arising from his faith in God.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Unfaithful priests. "And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened it not" (2 Chron. 24:5). The decay of the temple marked a decay of faith. Dilapidated churches always indicate the decline of spirituality. Lack of spirituality always is manifested by indifference and lukewarmness. These Levites failed because they had but little interest, and because they used what little money they did collect for other purposes than that for which it was intended. Indifference is the wintry blast that freezes the flowers of faith and hope.

The neglected temple. "But it was so, that in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house" (v. 6). Solomon's temple had not been built more than one hundred sixty years, yet there were breaches in it. The ruinous hand of time had touched it. It had been built of the most substantial materials, yet it was in sad need of repair. The church is in constant danger of spiritual decline, if not actual apostasy. Some one has said that every one is in danger of being a Pharisee but for the grace of God. When Nehemiah heard that the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, he was filled with such sorrow that it was reflected in his countenance. When Æneas would have saved the life of Anchises, the latter said, "Far be it from me, that I should desire to live when Troy suffers as it does." Can we not show a like devotion for God's work? When the body of the slaughtered Asahel was left by the wayside, there was not a man that came by but stayed (2 Sam. 2:23). When Jacob saw Joseph's bloody coat, he mourned and would go down into the grave after him, refusing to be comforted (Gen. 37:35). The showing of Cæsar's bloody robe in the market-place set all Rome in a tumult. Then, how is it possible for any Christian to behold the neglected, and, in places, the wounded and dying church, without crying with one of old, "O Lord, revive thy work" (Hab. 3:2)?

God's financial plan. "God loveth a cheerful giver" (Golden Text). "God loves the cheerful giver because he made the world on the plan of cheerful giving, and the great Artist loves all that is consistent with his plan. Why is the sun bright? Because it is giving away its light. Why is it glorious? Because it is scattering its beams on all sides. The moon—wherefore do we rejoice in her? Because what light she receives from the sun she gives again to us. Even yon twinkling stars—their brightness and radiance consist in their giving. Take the earth; what is its excellence but what it gives? Thousands of years ago there were vast forests waving in the sunbeams, and giving themselves to die to form vast stores of coal for future use. There is not a tree but is giving perpetually. There is not a flower but its very sweetness lies in its shedding its fragrance. All the rivers run into the sea, the sea feeds the clouds, the clouds empty out their treasures, the earth gives back the rain in fertility, and so it is an endless chain of giving generosity. There is nothing in this world but lives by giving, except a covetous man, and such a man is a piece of grit in the machinery. He is out of date; out of God's order altogether." G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—We should all be engaged in work for the Lord.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

A good young king

Who helped?
- The king
- The priests
- The people

Saved for a purpose. This is an interesting lesson for children because we are studying about a boy who became king when seven years old. We are following up his history to see how he got along in his high office. Review the story of the crowning of Joash king. Recall the account of Athaliah's cruelty and ask the class to tell how Jehosheba, Joash's aunt, saved the baby from death. One could refer to the preservation of the child Moses from the death which Pharaoh had decreed, and the escape of the child Jesus from the destruction which Herod wished to accomplish. There is no doubt that Jehosheba carefully watched over the little Joash and taught him the law of the Lord. The children may ask why Athaliah did not find Joash. The answer is simple, for she did not worship the true God but served idols and worshiped in the temple of Baal.

The king and the temple. Refer to the fact that the house of the Lord had been built about one hundred fifty years, and during a considerable part of that time not much attention was given to it, for many of the people had gone to worshiping idols. The young king had been well trained and he desired to have the temple repaired. Impress upon the children the thought of reverence for God's house, and the idea that it should be well cared for.

The directions given to the priests. It was the duty of the priests to attend to the service of the temple. Explain the way in which the priests were to collect money to repair the temple and how negligent they were for years about carrying out the king's orders. Perhaps they had become accustomed to the broken-down condition of the Lord's house and thought it was well enough to let it go that way. This first attempt of Joash was a failure. The children may be able to tell you about the chest with the hole in the top of it for the collection of money to repair the temple. They have seen collection boxes fastened on the walls of churches and in other public places. The second plan for raising money worked well, because there was a definite object for which the people gave their money.

The part the people had. Show how impossible it would have been for the king to do all this alone. The king with the aid of the priests only was not able to do it. The people had a part to do. They gave their money because they had an interest in the house of the Lord. Then the workmen had an important part to perform. In large letters write the question, "Who repaired the temple?" In answer to the question write, "Joash, Jehoiada, priests, Levites, scribe, people, carpenters, builders, masons, hewers." They all worked together and succeeded in the great task before them.

LESSON VII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Nov. 8.—Daniel in the king's court.—Dan. 1:1-9. Tu.—Daniel's faithfulness.—Dan. 1:10-21. Wed.—The king's forgotten dream.—Dan. 2:1-13. Th.—Daniel's vision.—Dan. 2:14-24. Fr.—Daniel before the king.—Dan. 2:25-35. Sat.—Interpretation and exaltation.—Dan. 2:36-49. Su.—Reward of faithfulness.—Dan. 6:16-28.

Daniel in the King's Court—World's Temperance Sunday.—Daniel 1:1-21. Print 1:8-16, 19, 20.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verse, 15)

SUPT.—8 But Dan'iel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

School.—9 Now God had brought Dan'iel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Dan'iel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king.

11 Then said Dan'iel to Mel'zar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Dan'iel, Han-a-ni'ah, Mi'sha-el, and Az-a-ri'ah,

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

16 Thus Mel'zar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Dan'iel, Han-a-ni'ah, Mi'sha-el, and Az-a-ri'ah: therefore stood they before the king.

20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

*AMERICAN REVISION

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9 Now God made Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs. 10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your food and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse looking than the youths that are of your own age? so would ye endanger my head with the king. 11 Then said Daniel to the steward whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: 12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. 13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the youths that eat of the king's dainties; and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he hearkened unto them in this matter, and proved them ten days. 15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh, than all the youths that did eat of the king's dainties. 16 So the steward took away their dainties, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse.

19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. 20 And in every matter of wisdom and understanding, concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his realm.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 1 Cor. 16:13.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**There are rewards for those who stand by right principles.**

TOPIC.—**Youthful integrity.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Hebrew youths under training. II. Daniel's purpose. III. Standing the test. IV. The Hebrews honored.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 605.**

PLACE.—**Babylon.**

INTRODUCTION.—For World's Temperance Sunday we have one of the most inspiring lessons in the Bible. The courage and faith of the Hebrew youths and their devotion to God amid pagan surroundings are worthy of careful study. The story of Daniel and his companions is most interesting and uplifting. We leave the history of Judah under Joash and pass onward nearly three centuries to the beginning of the Jewish captivity to study the story of Daniel which has been an inspiration to millions of young men in all ages.

COMMENTARY.—I. HEBREW YOUTHS UNDER TRAINING (VS. 1-7). Nebuchadnezzar was a powerful king of Babylon and was fired with the ambition of world conquest. His father had met and conquered the Egyptian army and he had besieged Jerusalem soon after Jehoiakim was made king. He took as captives, among others, the youths, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. This was the beginning of the seventy years' captivity. The young men just named belonged to noble families and were destined to become important in the land of their captivity. The king of Babylon gave direction that some of the captives should be selected to be nourished and trained for positions of trust in his government. Those chosen must be superior in physical strength, beauty and intelligence. Among those selected were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, to whom, according to Oriental custom, new names were given. The names which these young men bore had each some reference to God: Daniel means, "Jehovah is my judge;" Hananiah, "The Lord is gracious;" Mishael, "Who is what God is?" Azariah, "The Lord hath helped." In each case the new name given had some reference

to a heathen god. These youths were to be fed from the king's table. They were to eat the rich food and to drink the wine prepared for him. They were to be under instruction for three years in preparation for the king's service. They were probably from twelve to sixteen years of age when they were called to begin their course of training.

II. DANIEL'S PURPOSE (vs. 8-13). **8. Daniel**—It is certain that Daniel belonged to a noble family in Judah. He was in Babylon during the entire period of the seventy years' captivity and lived some time after that. He was at least eighty-five years old when he died. **purposed in his heart**—Literally, "Laid it on his heart." Underneath his purpose was a strong desire to keep a clear conscience in spite of his heathen surroundings. **would not defile himself with.... the king's meat, nor....wine**—Daniel had been instructed in the law of God. The law of Moses forbade the eating of certain kinds of animals, and prescribed the manner of killing the animals which were to be eaten. The children of Israel were not to eat the blood. It was customary for heathen people to offer their food and drink to their idols by pouring out portions on the ground. Thus the Jew might defile himself: 1. By eating animals that were unclean. 2. By eating the flesh of beasts that had been strangled. 3. By partaking of that which had been offered in sacrifice to idols. "The king's dainties" (*R. V.*) would also be likely to weaken the physical and mental vigor of the Jewish youths. Daniel's temperance principles would not admit of his drinking wine. **the prince of eunuchs**—This was Ashpenaz (v. 3). **9. into favour and tender love**—The Revised Version, "To find kindness and compassion," is more exact. Ashpenaz became favorable to Daniel as soon as the latter made the request mentioned in the preceding verse. Daniel had a noble and amiable disposition, which won the admiration and love of Ashpenaz. Besides this the Lord was directing the course of Daniel and was moving upon the heart of the prince of the eunuchs to the end that the future prophet might have a standing at the court of Babylon. **10. I fear my lord the king**—Ashpenaz had received his orders and it would endanger his life to disobey them. Oriental monarchs were despots, had the power of life and death and did not hesitate to exercise that power (Dan. 2:5, 12) at the slightest provocation. This servant was responsible to the king for the physical condition and intellectual advancement of the Jewish youths. **worse liking**—"Worse looking."—*R. V.*

11. Melzar—"The steward."—*R. V.* This is not a proper name, but denotes the officer to whose immediate care Daniel and his companions were committed. **12. prove thy servants**—Daniel and his companions had confidence in the course they desired to take. They believed that if they honored God in keeping his law he would honor them and give them prosperity. **ten days**—Farrar calls this "a sort of mystic Persian week." It was long enough to give an idea as to the effects of the diet. **pulse**—The word means leguminous food, such as beans and peas, but is used here in a wider sense to include vegetable foods in general. **water to drink**—The wisdom, as well as piety, of the Hebrew young men was shown in their purpose to abstain entirely from the use of strong drink. **13. as thou seest, deal with thy servants**—Daniel was entirely willing to accept the results of the test. Temperance will bear the light of day and will stand the test everywhere. It recommends itself.

III. STANDING THE TEST (vs. 14-16). **14. so he consented**—"So he hearkened."—*R. V.* Daniel and his companions were courteous in the request that was made and perhaps for that reason it was granted. The steward may have been the more ready to grant the request, since the test was for only ten days; and if the Hebrew youths did not thrive during that time, there remained nearly three years of training, during which any slight disadvantage could be overcome. **15. appeared fairer, and they were fatter in flesh** (*R. V.*)—Godliness promotes temperance; temperance, health; health, a good complexion. Peace with God brings peace of conscience, serenity of mind and sweetness of temper; and these are the certain means of bringing sweetness of countenance.—*Robinson.* It is an evident fact that those who give themselves over to the pleasures of the flesh bear the signs of dissipation upon their countenances. The Hebrew youths were obeying their consciences and had a firm trust in God, therefore they thrived upon the healthful diet which they chose. **16. Melzar took away the portion of their meat**—"The steward took away their dainties."—*R. V.* The ten days' test had been so satisfactory that the steward considered it safe to continue to give them the food and drink they desired.

IV. THE HEBREWS HONORED (vs. 17-21). **17, 18.** These four youths were highly favored. The praise for their notable intellectual advancement is ascribed to God. It is expressly declared with regard to Daniel that he had an understanding of visions and dreams, which was one branch of Babylonian learning. "Visions were revelations to the prophets when awake, and dreams when asleep. God thus made one of the despised covenant people eclipse the Chaldean sages in the very science on which they most prided themselves."—*J., F. & B.* God gave Daniel this skill in the interpretation of dreams as a preparation for the great work that lay before him. The great men of Babylon were to know something of the God of Israel. At the end of three years the youths under training were brought in before the king. **19. the king communed with them**—Nebuchadnezzar talked with the young men with a view to ascertaining the progress they had made during their three years' training, and their fitness for the positions in which he desired their service. He found the four total abstainers superior to the others at every point. **before the king**—As his personal attendants. **20. in all matters of wisdom....ten times better**—The king subjected them to a severe test by asking them difficult questions and found the four Hebrew youths far superior to the wisest men in his kingdom. "Ten times better," is a term which means greatly superior, the number ten denoting completeness. **21.** Daniel survived Nebuchadnezzar and his successors and was still alive when Cyrus, the Persian, came into power.

QUESTIONS.—Who was Daniel and how came he to be in Babylon? Who were his three companions? What request did Daniel make and for what reason? In what respects was this a wise request? How was the request looked upon by Ashpenaz? What was the result of the ten days' test? How long was the course of training given to the young men? What was the object of the training? What was the result of the course which the youths took?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. A World's Temperance Sunday lesson. 2. We break away from the regular succession of historical lessons. 3. The events recorded belong to the period of the captivity of Judah.

II. THEME.—God's blessing upon a noble purpose.

III. DANIEL'S PURPOSE.—1. The circumstances of the captivity of Daniel and his companions. 2. Their probable age at the time of their selection for training. 3. The significance of the change in their names. 4. The course of training proposed by King Nebuchadnezzar. 5. The nature of the purpose in which Daniel was joined by his three companions.

IV. DANIEL'S REQUEST GRANTED.—1. Daniel's courtesy in presenting his request. 2. The nature of the diet which he desired. 3. God's hand in making the officer having the young men in charge favorable toward them. 4. Men honor those who have convictions and stand by them. 5. The Hebrew youths believed that God would so favor them in the proposed ten days' test that the steward would be convinced. 6. The position in which the chief of the eunuchs placed himself.

V. THE RESULT OF ABSTINENCE.—1. Physical effects. (1) Their countenances were fairer than those of the others. (2) They gained in flesh. 2. Intellectual effects. (1) They were able to learn readily. (2) Their minds were not dulled by the king's dainties and wine. 3. The difference between the two classes of young men was easily recognized by the king.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**Youthful integrity.**

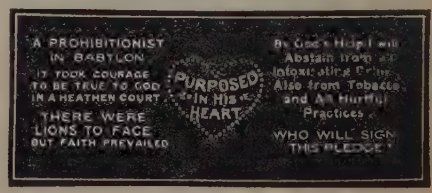
I. Determined Daniel's prosperity.
II. Prevented habits of intemperance.

I. Determined Daniel's prosperity. It was a sad occasion at Jerusalem when the most promising of the young nobility, in whom the hopes of the nation were centered, were carried away captive to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar had one design in the matter while God had another. The Babylonian king designed to induct the young Hebrews into all the lore of the Chaldeans to the end that all remembrance of their allegiance to the true God might be obliterated. God was preparing them to do service for his church at a time when it was no longer hidden away among the mountains of Judah, but was in danger of being obliterated by the powerful nations that surrounded it. The religion of Daniel and his companions was submitted to a very powerful and decisive test, which proved how firmly rooted in their hearts were the sacred teachings of their youth. Their early instructors were those who had remained faithful to the Most High in that age of apostasy. The test was either to follow conscience or appetite; to cease to be an Israelite to become a favorite with the great king of Babylon. It involved the surrender of principle, the compromise of truth and of apostasy from true religion. With heroic steadfastness they made the will of God, even in small things, their rule of conduct. Daniel looked upon all wrong-doing as defiling to himself. Fidelity to religious conviction was his chief characteristic. It was the purpose of the king to surround himself with all the splendor of talent that would bestow additional glory on himself and his court. He proposed to turn the superiority of the young Hebrews to account. The first step toward making them Chaldean sages was to change their names. They had received from their fathers names divinely significant. In Babylon they were called upon to assume the names which indicated their consecration to the gods of Babylon. Their Hebrew names were a witness, not only to their nationality, but to their religion. Every repetition of them would have sounded like a challenge to the supremacy of the Babylonish deities. The king proposed a new order of things in a distinct political aggrandizement. He offered free education and full support. He did not take into account their previous training, which proved to be a difficulty at the very threshold of the brilliant career which he had planned for them.

II. Prevented habits of intemperance. In this narrative we see the youth Daniel making his record for temperance and piety against temptations and inducements which might shake the purpose of strong men. In refusing the king's meat, Daniel proclaimed himself the follower of another religion. It was an indirect avowal of his Hebrew faith. It was a practical affirmation of the benefits and blessings of temperance. He was willing to be useful, but he would not peril his convictions nor sacrifice his principles. His purpose asserted itself over the crushing effects of misfortune and calamity and the subtle, ensnaring power of evil surroundings. Daniel's humility was as marked as his faith. His purpose was not with the stubbornness of self-will, but with the resolution of deep conviction. Greater than Nebuchadnezzar, greater than Babylon or aught that Babylon afforded was his heroic nature. His purpose meant the rigorous observance of the Mosaic law at a time when the Jewish system appeared to be falling into fragments. He was as free in Babylon as he had been in Jerusalem and he determined to remain so. With him moderation meant mastery. He guarded his influence while he guarded his soul. Not in abstinence only, but in all his conduct he was pure. The eunuch was awed by the purity and courage of Daniel, whose purpose was formed before defilement began. When self-respect and fidelity to God were assailed, he scrupulously maintained the moral and religious principles which had been a part of his early education, thus proving the blessedness of early piety. It was an occasion of developing the faith and character of Daniel and his companions. The advantage of early training, the power of influence and the advantages of temperance are distinct features in this period of Daniel's history. His conduct through life accorded with his youthful purpose. His attitude was really great in its motive and spirit.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Yield not to temptation (v. 8). Recent magazine articles have been describing how a great glacier in Alaska has been changing geographical lines and even making a new harbor. These immense rivers of ice have a slow, but irresistible movement. Slowly, but with fearful power, they move on, carrying in their bosom huge boulders and trunks of mighty trees. The rock-ribbed mountains have their foundations hollowed out by the powerful ice current. Only the sea can change its course. Only heat can dissipate its power. In the beginning this mighty force was a small mountain stream. So the beginnings of power lie within us. If we yield that control to the habit of drink, or any other sinful habit, the will becomes enfeebled; then comes the crushing weight of habit; then the accumulated load of sins; then certain destruction. The fire of God's love can melt the load of sin, but if the glacier has formed, a desolate path will be left behind. Daniel-like, purpose in your heart that the beginning shall not take place.

Beware of the first step. Daniel and his companions steadfastly refused to take even the first drink of the king's wine. A few years ago a noted wild animal trainer gave a performance with his pets in one of the leading London theaters. He took his lions, tigers, leopards, and hyenas through their part of the entertainment, awing the audience by his wonderful nerve and his control over them. As a closing act he was to introduce an enormous boa-constrictor, thirty-five feet long. He had bought it when it was only two or three days old, and for twenty-five years he had handled it daily, so that it was considered perfectly harmless and completely under his control. He had seen it grow from a tiny reptile, which he often carried in his bosom, into a fearful monster. The curtain rose on an Indian woodland scene. The weird strains of an oriental band stole through the trees. A rustling noise was heard, and a huge serpent was seen winding its way through the undergrowth. It stopped with head erect. Its bright eyes sparkled, and its whole body seemed animated. A man emerged from the foliage, and their eyes met. The serpent quailed before the man. Man was victor. The serpent was under the control of a master. Under his guidance and direction it performed a series of frightful feats. At a signal from the man it slowly approached him and began to coil its heavy folds around him. Higher and higher did they rise until man and serpent seemed blended into one. Its hideous head was reared aloft above the mass. The man gave a little scream, and the audience united in a thunderous burst of applause, but it froze on their lips. The trainer's scream was a wail of death agony. Those cold, slimy folds had embraced him for the last time. They had crushed the life out of him, and the horror-stricken audience heard bone after bone crack as those powerful folds tightened upon him. Man's plaything had become his master. His slave for twenty-five years had enslaved him. In this horrible incident is portrayed the whole story of intemperance. The man who has taken the first glass of intoxicating liquor has the boa of intemperance in his bosom. If he throttles the monster now, it is easily done. But if he permits it to live, feeds and nourishes it, he is in danger of being destroyed. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—We should make up our minds to do always what is right.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

FOUR NOBLE YOUNG MEN

DANIEL'S { PURPOSE
TEST
TRIUMPH

Jewish captives in Babylon. We turn from the study of King Joash to study four noble Jewish captives. Note a few other slaves in Bible history. Recall the story of the Jewish girl who was made a slave by the Syrians and who was the means of sending Naaman, her master, to Israel, where he was cured of his leprosy. It will be necessary to tell the circumstances under which Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were taken as captives to Babylon. This was at the beginning of the seventy years' captivity, and Daniel remained a captive during those seventy years. He was still in Babylon in the time of Cyrus after the close of the captivity. Even in captivity he was a blessing to his captors.

Daniel's purpose. The simple story of Daniel which we have in this lesson is intensely interesting to children and carries with it its moral teachings. Explain the object the king had in view in selecting the choicest of the Jewish boys to be fed from his table and to be educated. Explain also how the food would be likely to offend conscientious Jews. The meat might be that of unclean animals. It might not be properly prepared. It was likely that the food had been offered in sacrifice to idols. The wine had also been thus offered. Strong drink was refused, moreover, because of its injurious effects. Dwell upon the courage and manliness of Daniel in purposing in his heart not to defile himself. One may defile himself by falsehood, by theft, by deception, by bad language, by envy, by selfishness, by hatred. Note the encouragement that comes to most of us to have right purposes.

Daniel's test. This young man and his three companions were sure that God would bless and prosper them in taking the course they believed to be right. They had made their request humbly and kindly, and the Lord helped in having it granted. Explain to the class that the food given to them was different kinds of grain, fruit and vegetables, and they had water to drink. God was preparing Daniel for the great work that lay before him. There are many children who want everything they see and hear of whether it would be good for them or not. It was not so with Daniel. He desired to be at his best and to please God.

Daniel's triumph. Thus far the four Hebrew boys had been successful. Tell about the three years of dieting and training. At last the day came when they must appear before the king that he might examine them. That was a peculiar examination. He was to examine their looks, their weight and their skill in answering hard questions. The four total abstainers were far ahead of all the others, and were given high positions by the king. They had not used strong drink, which weakens mental power.

LESSON VIII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Nov. 15.—Jonah a missionary to Nineveh.—Jonah 3:1-10. Tu.—Disobedience and punishment.—Jonah 1:1-16. Wed.—Deliverance and prayer.—Jonah 1:17-2:10. Th.—Complaint and rebuke.—Jonah 4:1-11. Fr.—Universal dominion.—Isa. 60:1-9. Sat.—Future glory.—Isa. 60:10-22. Su.—Fellow citizens.—Eph. 2:11-22.

Jonah a Missionary to Nineveh—Foreign Missionary Lesson.—Jonah 3: 1-4: 11. Print 3: 1-10.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verse, 10)

SUPT.—1 And the word of the Lord came unto Jo'nah the second time, saying,

School.—2 Arise, go unto Nin'e-veh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

3 So Jo'nah arose, and went unto Nin'e-veh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nin'e-veh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

4 And Jo'nah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nin'e-veh shall be overthrown.

5 So the people of Nin'e-veh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

6 For word came unto the king of Nin'e-veh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nin'e-veh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:

8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

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1 And the word of Jehovah came unto Jonah the second time, saying, 2 Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. 3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of Jehovah. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, of three days' journey. 4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 And the people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. 6 And the tidings reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he made proclamation and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water; 8 but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast, and let them cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands. 9 Who knoweth whether God will not turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? 10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Matt. 28: 19, 20.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**We who have the gospel are under obligation to give it to those who are without it.**

TOPIC.—**Jonah's mission.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Jonah's mission. II. A penitent people. III. The prophet instructed.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 800.**

PLACES.—**Israel; Nineveh in Assyria.**

INTRODUCTION.—Even in the dark days of Israel when the nation was crowding on toward destruction through unbelief and disobedience, the Lord had some who heard his voice and heeded his commands. Jonah's home was in Gath-hepher in the tribe of Zebulon not far north of Nazareth. The Lord gave the nation prophets to warn them of the results of their rebellion, and he raised up those who should declare the truth concerning other nations. The mission upon which the prophet Jonah was sent and the results of his preaching afford an excellent basis for a missionary lesson. There are other lessons presented in the life and character of the prophet which are practical and helpful, but for to-day the great truth to be emphasized is God's interest in the salvation of all peoples. The story of Jonah's call to go to Nineveh, and his turning aside to go to Tarshish in order to escape the responsibility of his mission is familiar. He knew that God is a God of mercy, and he believed that upon the repentance of the Ninevites the Lord would spare the city and thus Jonah would appear as a false prophet. While some regard the Book of Jonah as an allegory or a parable, the character of the writing, and the references to the prophet, both in the Old Testament and in the New, present ample evidence that the book is historical (2 Kings 14: 25; Matt. 12: 39-41; Luke 11: 29, 30). The miraculous preservation of the prophet when thrown overboard during the storm on his attempted journey to Tarshish, has staggered some people, yet without proper reason. Sea-monsters, for that is the meaning of the word translated "great fish" or "whale," are found in the Mediterranean, capable of swallowing a man or even a horse. The preservation of Jonah's life for the three days, from the time the fish swallowed him until he was cast upon the shore, was a miracle, and the story should by no means be discredited on that account.

COMMENTARY.—I. JONAH'S MISSION (3: 1-4). **1. Jonah**—Very little is known of this prophet aside from what is given in his prophecy. He was the son of Amittai and his home was in the northern part of Israel. **the second time**—God in mercy gave Jonah a second call to carry the message to Nineveh. At the first call, instead of going the six hundred miles northeast to Nineveh he started westward to Tarshish, in Spain, a distance of two thousand miles. His disastrous experience on that trip made him

willing to obey the second call, although the very conditions that turned him aside the first time still prevailed. **2. go unto Nineveh**—His mission was to Nineveh, which was the great city of Assyria. This nation was hostile to Israel, and within a few decades carried Israel into captivity. **that great city**—The city must have had a population of more than half a million, and Jonah was called to go and "cry against it" (ch. 1:2). Farrar calls it the London of the ancient world. **the preaching that I bid thee**—The reason for the mission to Nineveh is given in the first call that Jonah received, where the Lord said, "Their wickedness is come up before me" (ch. 1:2). The city was a stronghold of heathenism, and the sins which accompanied their religious observances and resulted from them had come up before the Lord, who knew the kind of truth that the Ninevites needed and the preaching that would prove effectual. The Lord who calls men and women to preach his word has full authority to declare what shall be the nature of the messages they deliver.

3. of three days' journey—Counting twenty miles as a day's journey, the distance around Nineveh was sixty miles. This was surrounded by a wall one hundred feet high and broad enough at the top for three chariots to be driven abreast. "Within the vast space thus enclosed rose palaces of almost inconceivable size and grandeur, amidst gardens and grounds in which the highest art had created every beauty that could gratify pride or ravish the senses. One palace alone, disclosed in its ruins by the toil of the explorer, revealed twenty-seven huge gates of entrance, guarded by colossal human-headed bulls and gigantic lions, and seventy-one halls and chambers, adorned throughout, round all their sides, by great squares of alabaster covered with sculptures of the warlike deeds of the 'king of kings' and varied scenes from civil or military life."—*Geikie.* **4. began to enter....a day's journey**—The thought seems to be that as he entered the city and proceeded on his way he delivered the message which God had given him for the people. **yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown**—The cup of Nineveh's iniquity was almost full, and unless the people should repent, there would be but forty days before the city would be destroyed. Taking this proclamation in connection with what took place later, we must conclude that there was an implied condition in the decreed destruction of the city. If the people did not turn from their wickedness by hearty repentance, they would be destroyed. The shortness of the time and the severity of the punishment would seem most impressive when the message was delivered by the stranger prophet from Israel.

II. A PENITENT PEOPLE (3:5-10). **5. the people of Nineveh believed God**—It was a strange sight that met the eyes of the Ninevites, and a strange message that greeted their ears, as the foreign prophet in his peculiar prophet's garb and with his denunciatory words passed throughout their city, yet with the work of the Holy Spirit the message took effect and the people believed God. **proclaimed a fast**—A sign of humiliation and repentance. **put on sackcloth**—They covered themselves with a coarse cloth, made of goat's-hair, which was a symbol of sorrow and mourning. The repentance seems to have been immediate and general. **6. the king of Nineveh**—He placed himself upon a level with his lowest subject, and all humbled themselves because of their sins. **sat in ashes**—He left his costly throne and took the lowest place, expressing his deep sorrow. **7. neither man nor beast**—The case was one of momentous interest and demanded the deepest humiliation. Keil says, "It was the manifestation of the thought, that just as the animals which live with man are drawn into fellowship with his sin, so their sufferings might also help to appease the wrath of God." Men and women, old and young, high and low, and even the cattle themselves, all kept such a fast as the total abstinence from food implies.—*Clarke.* **8. cry mightily unto God**—This shows the intensity of feeling that prevailed. There was a marvelous change from their sinful practises and idolatrous worship to prayer to the true God. **turn....from his evil way**—Prayer to be effectual must be accompanied by a turning away from all sin. **9. who can tell if God will turn**—The very fact that Jonah's message, "Yet forty days," showed a few days' delay in the execution of the sentence, gave them hope that if they should repent and turn away from their sins the Lord would accordingly turn away his anger from them. **10. God saw their works**—He saw as man can not see. Man sees the outward signs of repentance, but God sees the condition of the heart. They brought forth "fruits meet for repentance," turning from their evil ways. **God repented**—He changed his purpose in keeping with their changed attitude toward him. This missionary journey of the prophet Jonah was eminently successful. It was divinely directed. The prophet was called by the Lord, who gave him his field and instructed him as to what he should say. The message was attended by the power of the Spirit and took immediate effect.

III. THE PROPHET INSTRUCTED (4:1-11). Jonah was grieved over the results of his ministry. The Ninevites had repented and their city was preserved. He had urged as an excuse for shrinking from duty, that God was merciful and would spare the city if the people should repent. He had more regard for his reputation as a prophet than for the salvation of a great city. He was glad that the Lord had mercy upon him and preserved him, but he was not pleased because the Lord spared the Ninevites upon their repentance. He desired to watch the results of his preaching. The gourd which furnished him shelter and which was destroyed by a worm became to him through the Lord's instruction an impressive lesson. He mourned over the destruction of the gourd which was of little value, and should not the Lord have regard for the population of a great city? His mercy would not permit him to destroy one hundred twenty thousand children of tender age when the adult population had repented. Humanity is liable to fall into grievous errors. Men are inclined to be moved by what affects their personal interests. If Jonah had had an unbiased view of the situation, he would not have complained.

QUESTIONS.—Upon what mission was Jonah sent? What course did he take upon the first call? Where was Nineveh and how far from the land of Israel? How large a city was Nineveh in extent and population? What was the moral condition of Nineveh? What message did Jonah deliver? What effect did his preaching have upon the people? What did God do with the city? Why? Why was Jonah displeased? What lesson did God teach Jonah by means of the gourd? Tell in what sense Jonah might be considered a foreign missionary.

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The place in history of this prophecy. 2. The book is historical rather than allegorical. 3. The lesson is missionary in its character.

II. Theme.—God's interest in the salvation of all peoples.

III. The mission field.—1. Nineveh. (1) Location. The capital of Assyria. (2) Its size. Modern excavations have uncovered the city of the size indicated in the lesson. (3) The walls enclosed the buildings and much land. (4) The population. 2. A heathen city. 3. A proud and wicked people, cruel and oppressive. 4. Enemies to Israel, hence dangerous for a prophet of Israel.

IV. The missionary and his call.—1. Jonah's ancestry and birthplace. 2. His first call. (1) He was a prophet in Israel (2 Kings 14:25). (2) His attempt to evade duty. (3) His rescue and repentance. (4) Jonah's lack of faith. 3. The second call. (1) God's mercy in granting him another opportunity. (2) Jonah's response. 4. God calls men and women to-day to go to foreign lands with the gospel message. He calls others to stay at home and support the workers on the field.

V. The message.—1. It was suited to the field where it was to be delivered. 2. It was short. We may suppose that the prophet enlarged upon it either publicly or in private conversation. 3. One missionary to 600,000 heathen. 4. The message that is borne to the heathen world to-day, the gospel of the Son of God.

VI. The harvest.—1. The missionary secured a hearing at once. 2. The people humbled themselves and repented. 3. The attitude assumed by the king. 4. The proclamation issued by the king. 5. The picture of an entire city turning away from sin to the true God. 6. The hand of God was stayed. 7. The effect of the repentance upon Jonah. (1) His complaint. (2) The parable of the gourd. 8. Prayer for missions.

Practical Survey

Topic.—**Jonah's mission.**

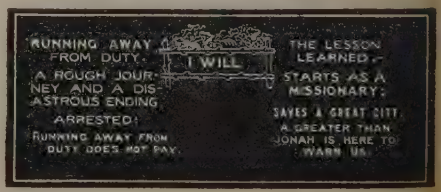
I. Demanded implicit obedience.
II. Resulted in genuine repentance.

I. Demanded implicit obedience. Our lesson outlines the history of a special mission to a heathen city. Jonah includes it in a vivid narrative of a strange episode in his life. From it we learn what God is to those who truly repent. Jonah, the runaway prophet, is here introduced as the successful preacher. He was changed from a coward to a dauntless, heroic prophet. He had thought himself free when he fled, but his first real enjoyment of freedom came when he started to fulfil God's command which was plain, stern and uncompromising. Jonah was brought through all his troubles to just that point that he must obey the command of God, that through him the people of Nineveh might learn of God and his love and holiness. God was merciful to Jonah in following him through all his flight, in bringing him back to the starting-point, in using him though he had shown himself unworthy. Over against the confession of his lack of obedience and of charity, Jonah placed the record of God's loving-kindness and tender mercy. God's command, though full of restored confidence, implied a warning not to risk any further disobedience, to be exact in fulfilling the will of God in giving the message exactly as he received it.

II. Resulted in genuine repentance. God gave remarkable power to the message of his servant, so that the inhabitants of Nineveh, that great and dissipated city, were aroused to deep concern. Jonah's message was direct, simple and plain with no enlargement, no argument, no exhortation. It sounded just one note, an unqualified announcement of coming judgment. No proof was offered of his divine commission. No call to repentance was addressed to their consciences. No promise was made or hope held out. The miserable plight of the people of Nineveh consisted in three discoveries, their great sin, the shortness of their time and the terrible character of their threatened destruction. So sensible was the king of Nineveh of their demerit and the insufficiency of their repentance to make atonement for their sins, that he was doubtful what would be the consequence. The cup of Nineveh's iniquity was full. A cry of coming judgment, brief and plain, startling and stern, was the thing needed. God was merciful to Nineveh in sending a messenger to warn the city and in preparing the hearts of the people for the message. Remorse for their wrongs, the robbery and the violence of many generations, was awakened. Though terrified and conscious that they were guilty before God and justly summoned to punishment, they evidenced some hope of grace as the result of Jonah's preaching. All classes joined in penitent acts, in prayer and reform. The king set the example. Self-abasement was universal and thorough. By the joint authority of the king and his government a proclamation was issued for public fasting, prayer and penitence on the part of the people. They acknowledged that the message must have come from the Lord. The history of their repentance reveals God's purpose of grace in the salvation of sinners. His purposes are of grace, even when they seem to be only proclamations of wrath. They are given for the very purpose of bringing the sinner to salvation by bringing him to repentance. God turned from the infliction of threatened punishment because Nineveh turned from sin. He did not change his purpose. He changed his method of working out his purpose. The whole attitude of the Ninevites toward sin and God being changed, God's attitude toward them was changed. Repentance in man is change of mind and purpose issuing in change of conduct. Repentance in God is change of operation or administration according as man's conduct agrees with or violates the requirement of divine law. Jonah's mission to Nineveh was really designed to prevent desolation. The narrative strikingly illustrates God's love and his eagerness to forgive.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The authority for missions. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19, 20, R. V.).

The aim of missions (v. 2). The aim of missions is to make Jesus Christ known to the world. It is not to socialize the world, but to evangelize it. A missionary was standing near a Buddhist temple in India when a native woman, carrying a baby in her arms, came to pray. As she threw herself on the ground and held the baby up in her arms, the missionary saw that the child was ill-shapen and deformed. The woman prayed this prayer: "Oh, grant that my child may grow fair as other children! Grant that it may grow comely! Grant that it may grow strong! Oh, hear the prayer of a mother and of a mother's breaking heart!" As she rose to go, he said, "Friend, to whom have you prayed?" She said, "I don't know; but surely somewhere there must be some one to hear the cry of a mother's heart, and to keep a mother's heart from breaking."

The method of missions (v. 4). God's method of missions is to find men who will go. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:14, 15). Jonah was sent to Nineveh. Isaiah was sent to the sinners of his generation. Paul was sent into Macedonia. Carey, Judson, Moffat and all their successful followers in the line of missionary succession were men God-called and heaven-sent to their work.

The power of missions (v. 5). A Tamil tract was picked up near a mission church in India recently, reading as follows: "Hindus! Awake, or you are lost! How many thousands of thousands have these missionaries turned to Christianity! On how many more have they cast their nets! If we sleep as heretofore, in a short time they will turn all to Christianity and our temples will be changed into churches. Is there no learned Pundit to be secured for money who will crush the Christians? How long will water remain in a reservoir which continually lets out, but receives none in? Let all the people join as one man to banish Christianity from our land."

The success of missions (v. 10). The following statement of John G. Paton, in an address given in 1900, is a sample of what can be reported from a hundred mission fields: "When we went to the South Sea Islands, we went to a people without civilization, without clothing, without a written language, sunken so low that one almost despaired of their ever being able to receive the gospel. Indeed, the aborigines of Australia were considered so low that they couldn't receive the gospel; our islanders were considered the same. Now that gospel has been given to them, and by God's grace it has proved even there, among the benighted cannibals, the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. We have now on that group nearly 3,000 converts; these people have family worship in their houses, with God's blessing asked at every meal."

G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—We can all help on the work of missions.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

A MISSIONARY AND HIS MISSION

JONAH'S { CALL / MESSAGE / SUCCESS

Jonah the missionary prophet. Ask the class what a missionary is, and by careful questioning bring out the qualities of good missionaries and the work they do. Let as many of the class as can tell the name of some missionary and something about him. Learn who in the class are doing something to help the missionary cause. In teaching this lesson it will be well to take up the story of Jonah's call, his work and the results, not spending so much time upon his trip toward Tarshish as to leave out the missionary features of the lesson. Have a map at hand, or draw one, to show where Joppa, Tarshish and Nineveh are located. We read in the Bible of no other prophet who was sent to a Gentile nation.

Jonah's call. Tell the children to think of one thing about this call and be ready to tell it to you as you ask them one by one. On the board write a word or two of each answer to keep it in mind. When all have answered, tell the story in proper order, using the answers given by the children as far as possible. Point out Jonah's sin of unbelief and disobedience and show how likely people who shrink from duty are to get into trouble. Can the children tell what lesson Jonah learned by trying to go to Tarshish? Did he make anything by the attempt? He paid his fare to Tarshish but never reached his destination. Explain the kind of field to which Jonah was called. Make it clear to their minds that God calls men and women now to go as missionaries. Tell of the mission fields of Africa, India or China, and what the condition of the children is there.

Jonah's message. Repeat it to the class and have them repeat it after you until they can say it alone, then explain to them why it was that the city was threatened with destruction. Give a short description of the city, telling about its size, the walls and the number of people living in it. Tell how Jonah preached. It was different from what we know of here. He had no church, not even a tabernacle. He went from place to place in the city, and everywhere he went he said—. Have the children repeat the sermon. We can not tell how long it took him to give his message to 600,000 people, but we are sure he did his work well. Explain what the message is that our missionaries carry to the heathen.

The results. Describe the scene of a great city in mourning over their sins. Tell the different things the people did in order to escape destruction. Write, "The people of Nineveh," and in a brace after it write, "believed," "fasted," "wore sackcloth," "turned away from evil," "cried mightily unto God." Explain that the sackcloth was coarse, rough cloth, made from goat's hair, brown in color, and was worn to express great grief.

LESSON IX

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Nov. 22.—Amos the fearless prophet.—Amos 5: 1-15. Tu.—Form and essence.—Isa. 1: 10-17. Wed.—Jehovah's controversy.—Micah 6: 1-8. Th.—Lack of knowledge.—Hos. 4: 1-10. Fr.—Goal of prophecy.—Isa. 61: 1-9. Sat.—Sheep among wolves.—Matt. 10: 16-23. Su.—Divine protection.—Matt. 10: 24-33.

Amos the Fearless Prophet—Home Missionary Lesson.—Amos 5: 1-15.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 14, 15)

SUPT.—1 Hear ye this word which I take up against you, even a lamentation, O house of Is'ra-el.

School.—2 The virgin of Is'ra-el is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land; there is none to raise her up.

3 For thus saith the Lord God: The city that went out by a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth by an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Is'ra-el.

4 For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Is'ra-el, Seek ye me, and ye shall live:

5 But seek not Beth'-el, nor enter into Gil'gal, and pass not to Beer-she'ba: for Gil'gal shall surely go into captivity, and Beth'-el shall come to nought.

6 Seek the Lord, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Jo'seph, and devour it, and there be none to quench it in Beth'-el.

7 Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth,

8 Seek him that maketh the seven stars and O-ri'on, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name:

9 That strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress.

10 They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.

11 Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

12 For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.

13 Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.

14 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken.

15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Jo'seph.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 Hear ye this word which I take up for a lamentation over you, O house of Israel. 2 The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is cast down upon her land; there is none to raise her up. 3 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah: The city that went forth a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which went forth a hundred shall have ten left, to the house of Israel.

4 For thus saith Jehovah unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live; 5 but seek not Beth-el, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beer-sheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Beth-el shall come to nought. 6 Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour, and there be none to quench it in Beth-el. 7 Ye who turn justice to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth, 8 seek him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth (Jehovah is his name); 9 that bringeth sudden destruction upon the strong, so that destruction cometh upon the fortress.

10 They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. 11 Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof. 12 For I know how manifold are your transgressions, and how mighty are your sins—ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate from their right. 13 Therefore he that is prudent shall keep silence in such a time; for it is an evil time.

14 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be with you, as ye say. 15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish justice in the gate: it may be that Jehovah, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. Jer. 23: 28.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord sends warnings to those who forsake him.**

TOPIC.—**God's message to Israel.**

OUTLINE.—**I. A lamentation for Israel. II. An exhortation to seek God. III. The prophet hated. IV. Hope extended.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 750.**

PLACES.—**Tekoa, the prophet's home; Bethel, the place where he prophesied.**

INTRODUCTION.—We turn to the study of Amos, one of the earliest of the minor prophets. Amos was a faithful prophet of the Lord, who lived during the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel. His home was Tekoa, six miles south of Bethlehem, and twelve miles south of Jerusalem. By occupation he was a herdsman. He is also spoken of as a gatherer of "sycomore" fruit, which is a sort of wild fig. This fruit will not ripen unless it is pinched or pressed, and this act is implied in the literal meaning of the expression, "Gatherer of sycomore fruit" (Amos 7: 14), so that Amos was a "pincher of wild figs." His life afforded him abundant opportunity for meditation. His devotion to God and his communion with him fitted Amos to become a prophet. He was called to exercise that office, being especially a prophet to Israel, although he belonged to the kingdom of Judah. The scene of his labors as a prophet was Bethel, twenty-five miles north of his home, a center of idolatrous worship (1 Kings 12: 28, 29), as well as the seat of a school of the prophets (2 Kings 2: 3). His name means "burden," and was in keeping with the character of the work which he was called to do. The message was a weighty one. It foretold the downfall of Israel. In the first part of his prophecy (1:1–2: 3), Amos denounces the sins of surrounding nations; in the second (2: 4–

6: 14), he gives a description of the moral condition of Judah and Israel; in the third (7: 1-9: 10), he foretells the destruction of the sinful nation; and in the fourth (9: 1-15), he foretells the Messiah's kingdom and the happiness of God's people. The lesson to-day presents a view of Israel in great prosperity and also living in great luxury, and, therefore, in great danger. The chapter opens with a lamentation for Israel and a prophecy of its destruction, which is deserved, inasmuch as the nation was persistent in rebelling against God. The prophet exalts Jehovah, thus giving a strong reason why Israel should earnestly seek him. There is hope for the nation if the people will turn to the Lord, yet there is no expression of hope that such repentance will take place. This is designed as a home missionary lesson, and aptly so, for Amos was an Israelite and he was sent to other Israelites.

COMMENTARY.—I. A LAMENTATION FOR ISRAEL (vs. 1-3). **1. hear ye this word**—Amos came with a message from the Lord and earnestly sought the attention of the people to what he had to say. **a lamentation**—This word means a dirge or formal lament over a departed friend, and the prophet was mourning over the nation as though it was already destroyed. **house of Israel**—The northern kingdom. **2. virgin of Israel**—The nation is here personified as a woman. **is fallen**—Israel as represented by a virgin is no longer beautiful or attractive. Though the nation was prosperous when Amos delivered the message, he looked upon its destruction, which was sure to come, as already past. **is forsaken**—Is not only "fallen" but abandoned. **none to raise her up**—Her condition was hopeless. This presents the picture of the nation taken into captivity by Assyria and she never recovered. **3. went out by a thousand**—It would require a considerable city to furnish a thousand fighting men, but in the time of Jeroboam II there was great temporal prosperity. **an hundred**—The nation would be reduced by disasters and defeats to one tenth its strength at that time. This period of great prosperity was only a few decades before the complete overthrow of the kingdom.

II. AN EXHORTATION TO SEEK GOD (vs. 4-9). **4. seek ye me, and ye shall live**—The Lord by his prophet pointed the people to the only means of escape from impending destruction. They were far away from God by disobedience and unbelief and it would mean penitence and the exercise of faith to seek him successfully. The promise given was definite and encouraging, but it was conditional. **5. seek not Beth-el**—Bethel was the center of the idolatrous worship instituted by Jeroboam. The people had been seeking Bethel to the destruction of the nation and the prophet warned them against the practise. **nor enter into Gilgal**—This was Joshua's first camping-ground west of the Jordan. The people were making it a center of idolatrous worship. **pass not to Beer-sheba**—A place in the south of Judah. Abraham had lived there and it was looked upon with veneration. It came to be a center of corrupt worship. **Beth-el shall come to nought**—Bethel means house of God, but it would be reduced to nothing. **6. in the house of Joseph**—This expression means Israel. Ephraim was a son of Joseph, and the tribe of Ephraim which bore his name was one of the most important tribes of Israel.

7. ye who turn judgment to wormwood—In Israel judgment, or justice, did not prevail, and the people had to bear the burden of injustice and oppression. Wormwood stands for bitterness. "As justice is sweet, so injustice is bitterness to the injured."—*J., F. & B.* The prophet calls upon those who are guilty of injustice and are unrighteous to seek the Lord. **8. that maketh the seven stars**—"That maketh the Pleiades."—*R. V.* Amos calls attention to God's greatness and power as a reason why unrighteous Israel should seek him. Pleiades, the seven stars, is one of the brightest constellations in the heavens. **Orion**—Another striking group of stars. **shadow of death**—Night. **into the morning**—It is the Lord who causes day to follow night and day to be succeeded by night. **calleth for the waters of the sea**—The Almighty speaks to the waters and by evaporation they are gathered into clouds and fall as rain upon the earth. **the Lord is his name**—It is Jehovah, the self-existing, eternal One. **9. that bringeth sudden destruction upon the strong** (*R. V.*)—From illustrations of Jehovah's power as displayed in the physical government of the world, the prophet passes to examples supplied by the moral government of the world: he brings sudden destruction upon the mighty, so that even their strongest fortresses can not save them.—*Cam. Bib.*

III. THE PROPHET HATED (vs. 10-13). **10. they hate him that rebuketh**—Reproof is not desired by those who are bent on doing evil. They who oppose wickedness may expect to be hated. **in the gate**—The gates of Oriental cities were the places where justice was administered. **abhor him that speaketh uprightly**—The unrighteous were bitter in their hatred toward those who would speak honestly and expose their evil deeds. **11. your treading is upon the poor**—"Ye trample upon the poor."—*R. V.* **burdens of wheat**—Those in authority made oppressive demands upon the tillers of the soil. **houses of hewn stone**—The wealthy built such houses because of their solidity and beauty. The people of whom the prophet speaks had gained wealth through unrighteousness, and were building fine houses and planting "pleasant vineyards," but they would not be permitted to enjoy the houses or the vineyards. **12. they afflict the just**—"Ye that afflict the just."—*R. V.* The prophet declares what were the "manifold transgressions" and the "mighty sins" of the people of Israel. They were guilty of oppression, of bribery and of the thwarting of justice. **13. the prudent shall keep silence**—In such evil times one who opposed prevalent wrongs would endanger his life, therefore the prudent would be silent. "Amos was acting a higher part than mere prudence."

IV. HOPE EXTENDED (vs. 14, 15). **14. seek good, and not evil**—Amos calls upon the people of Israel to change their course. They had been following evil ways, but they must return to the Lord if they would live. There was hope for them if they would repent. **as ye have spoken**—They could not depend upon the mere fact that they were nominally God's people; they must be such in reality. **15. hate the evil, and love the good**—The prophet uses still stronger language in exhorting Israel to reform. **it may be**—There was still hope for the nation. **remnant of Joseph**—A remnant of Israel.

QUESTIONS.—Who was Amos? When and where did he live? What was his occupation? In whose reign in Judah did he live? Who was king of Israel when he prophesied? Against what nations did he prophesy? What was the temporal condition of Israel at this time? The moral condition? Of what sins were the people guilty? What was to be the result of Israel's sins? What does Amos exhort the people to do?

A Teaching Plan

I. Introductory.—1. The lesson last week was a foreign missionary study; to-day we have a home missionary lesson. 2. God does not leave the world without spiritual light. 3. A study of Amos. (1) His ancestry is unknown. (2) His home. (3) His date. (4) His occupation. (5) His character. 4. The prophecy. (1) Four parts. (2) The subject-matter. (3) The place of its delivery. 5. New Testament references to the prophecy of Amos. Acts 7:42, 43; 15:16, 17.

II. Theme.—A nation warned.

III. A nation's need.—1. The condition of Israel temporally and spiritually. 2. The prophet's lamentation and the occasion of it. 3. Prosperity had brought a neglect of true religion. 4. The attitude of Assyria toward Israel. 5. A statement showing how greatly the nation would be weakened (v. 3). 6. Sins which had been committed by the people. 7. The false security of those who depend upon a name or upon material resources.

IV. A faithful messenger.—1. The courage needed by one who bore such a message as this to Israel. 2. The unpopular truths that Amos brought to the people. (1) He charged them with being unjust. (2) He accused them of bribery. (3) He showed their wickedness in oppressing the poor. (4) They were idolatrous. 3. Those who cared for their personal safety would not cry out against such sins, but Amos was divinely commissioned and was fearless. 4. Hatred toward Amos, the reprover.

V. Hope extended.—1. Life was promised to Israel on condition that the people should seek the Lord. 2. They were warned against idolatry. 3. The appeal to the people upon the ground of Jehovah's greatness. 4. Though the people should acquire riches, they would not be permitted to enjoy them. 5. The prophet's earnest exhortations to the people to seek the Lord.

Practical Survey

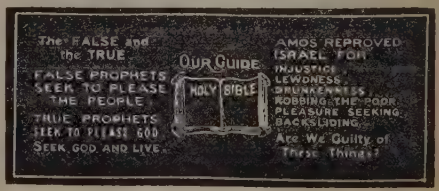
Topic.—God's message to Israel.

I. A citation of their iniquities.
II. An exhortation to righteousness.

I. A citation of their iniquities. This chapter discloses the tenderness of the prophet Amos, his compassion and pity, his yearning wish to help and save Israel. His attitude is the more remarkable as he belonged to the tribe of Judah and yet felt interested in the neighboring and hostile kingdom of Israel. Such pity gave evidence of his divine inspiration. He presents a lamentable account of Israel's present calamitous state with a lamentable prediction of its utter destruction. The people were told of their sins that they might see what occasion there was for them to repent and reform. They were told of their danger and their duty. The prophet's words must have fallen like a thunderbolt into the midst of the corrupt and careless inhabitants of Samaria and the other cities of Israel among whom he prophesied. He looked beyond the present prosperity of the land to the future ruin of its proud idolaters. The people lived in careless ease, enjoying all manner of luxury. No fear of God or man disturbed their rest or caused them to pause from their oppression or idolatry. Israel's many-sided and deep corruption was brought to view. Injustice was the usurper of righteousness in Israel. It was a prevalent and crying evil. The Jewish character was prone to it. What other nations had inflicted on them in this way they were only too ready to inflict on each other, not only privately, but publicly. Israel "not only did evil, but they sought it out and the occasion of it." The people had corrupted the worship of God and turned to idols. They had perverted justice among themselves. They were very oppressive to the poor. They were malicious persecutors of God's faithful ministers and people. Their judges aimed at nothing more than to enrich themselves. Israel had fallen. Her glory was gone, her pride humbled, her resources cut off. Thus was pictured the end of her false security. Her cities were marked for destruction on account of idolatries as the retribution that should follow abuse of privileges. The practised eye of the prophet penetrated their disguise and detected the hypocrisy and sin that lurked for their prey. Condemnation of sin was pronounced in the description of it. The things that might have been with Israel were far from existing facts. A nation made shipwreck was a sight for tears, a cause for lamentation.

II. An exhortation to righteousness. Israel's only condition of safety was amendment. Amos called to repentance while he made plain wherein declension had taken place. Israel had sinned a long time, and in punishment had been greatly decreased. The great alternative which was presented was the choice between good and evil. The voice of God through his prophet demanded obedience without hesitation or calculation. That involved specific effort with a standard of right and an object of pursuit. It denoted the duty of man to attain to the knowledge, the friendship and the fellowship of the Eternal. Amos, the prophet, brought the works of God and the name of God into one focus and made use of both as an argument with Israel to rise from the low and unworthy pretenses of religion, such as were represented by the calf-worship at Bethel, to him who sits high above the magnificence of all material forms. The shepherd prophet was familiar with the constellations. He looked on them as they shone radiantly in the heavens, changeless in their relation, undisturbed amidst human vicissitudes and constant in diffusing their light upon a troubled world, and bade Israel seek him who created them. To Amos nature had a voice of authority, appealing to the understanding and consciences of men; a summons to the unrighteous and irreligious to forsake their ways and to choose a better path. The prophet taught that God rules the universe with a view to reveal his righteous character, the end of all his rule being to instruct his children in righteousness. The argument of the prophet proceeds on the assumption that a divine purpose, a vast design runs through all nature and through all the movements of history. T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Andrew Fuller, alarmed at the spiritual lethargy of his church, preached a sermon on the duty of the church to give the gospel to the world, which resulted in a quickening of zeal and stirring of soul. The following Sabbath he preached again on the duty of the church to give the gospel to the world. On the third Sabbath the same theme was presented. Then his people began to inquire, "If the gospel can save the world, can it not save our own children, our own community?" As a result, the church and community experienced one of the most extensive revivals of their history. One of the underlying principles of the kingdom of God is that he "hath made of one blood all nations of men" (Acts 17:26). Whether at home or abroad, the souls of men are to be saved. The spirit of Christ is a passion for souls.

First things, first (vs. 4, 5). Gilgal and Bethel were the centers of idol worship. It was not to these that the people were to seek for help, but to the Lord. What is the use of calling on dumb idols when the God of all power is within reach? Again, why condemn the heathen for idolatry, when there are idols at home? Is the African with his nose jewels and anklets any more heathenish than fashion devotees, mincing along the street bedecked with jewels, wearing extreme styles of apparel? Is the immorality of the heathen any more of a sin than the white slave traffic of America? Is the praying machine of India any worse than the mechanical prayers offered by the unconverted church member? Is the worship of a dumb idol any worse than unbridled greed for gold? Truly, "A man's pride shall bring him low; but he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honor" (Prov. 29:23, R. V.).

The ground of appeal (v. 15). Jonah was sent as a foreign missionary, but Amos was given a message to the home folks. The basis for action is the same in each case, the need of a fellow man. There is no passing by on the other side with respect to any representative of suffering humanity by an obedient, loving disciple of Christ. To any true Christian an opportunity is a claim. And because Christian opportunity is a claim, it is inescapable. At home or abroad, the love of Christ is a constraining power. Dr. Babcock said, "Intensity and extensity are wrapped up together. Intense devotion to Jesus Christ means extensive sympathies. If a light is bright it will shine a long way. Only a precious ointment can fill a whole house with its fragrance. If Jesus Christ is everything to me, I know he can be everything to any man, and as much as in me lies I will take Christ to the last man. And because I know it, I have the woe resting upon me if I will not do all that is in me to let the last man who does not know Jesus Christ divide with me. There is no escape from this logic. If I love Jesus Christ, which means I am loyal to him, I never let clouds disturb the stars; never let feelings run away with conviction. If I love Jesus Christ, which means I keep his commandments, I am in touch with everybody to the end of the earth who needs him, and I can not take a washbowl and wash my hands and say that you must excuse me from this matter. Jesus Christ said, 'Ye are my witnesses,' beginning at Jerusalem. When Jesus said, 'Love thy neighbour,' he meant the man who needs you. Oh, the wonderful story of the good Samaritan! The man in need is your neighbor." G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The Lord calls us all to seek and find him.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

A wicked nation
A faithful prophet
An earnest plea
Home mission work

A wicked nation. Ask the class to tell what they know about the beginning of the nation of Israel. Let them tell the story of the call of Abraham, his faith and obedience. Mention the blessings God gave the children of Israel, calling attention to the great miracles that were wrought in their behalf. Refer to the Ten Commandments and note how much the people violated them. They neglected the worship of God and served idols. Recall the act of Jeroboam in setting up golden calves at Bethel and Dan for the people of his nation to worship. The poor people were oppressed by the rich and God was displeased with this course. One who was brought to trial before a court could not expect to be treated fairly. People could be hired for money to be unjust. Israel had greatly displeased the Lord.

A faithful prophet. Tell the story of Amos, whom the Lord called to go to the northern kingdom to tell the people the truth about themselves. Amos was a farmer when the Lord called him to be a prophet. People do not generally like to be told about their sins. They often become angry and try to injure those who tell them these things. Amos was not afraid of the people. Recall the story of Elijah who carried messages to the wicked King Ahab. Amos told Israel the condition they were in through sin and what the results would be. The Lord gives us the scriptures to show what his will is. He sends the Holy Spirit to show what is in the heart. God is good to show us our condition and our need.

An earnest plea. Go through the lesson and note the different exhortations there are for the people to seek the Lord. There are several reasons why they should seek him. The nation would be destroyed if they did not seek him. Jehovah has more power and greatness than all the idols of the heathen. The wicked would not be permitted to enjoy what they had obtained unjustly. Call the attention of the children to a few of the many exhortations and invitations to seek the Lord and the promises to those who earnestly seek him, which are given in the Bible.

Home missions. Refer to the mission of the prophet Jonah, who was sent to preach to the heathen of Nineveh. Amos was sent to bear a message from the Lord to those of his own race and religion. Tell the children what home mission work is to-day. There are many missions in our cities which are maintained for the purpose of reaching those who are down in sin. There are missions for those of foreign nations who come to us. Home mission work is being carried on among the poor people in the mountain regions of the South. Sunday-school missionaries are laboring to establish schools in places where there are none.

LESSON X

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Nov. 29.—Uzziah's pride and punishment.—2 Chron. 26:16-23. Tu.—Uzziah's prosperity.—2 Chron. 26:1-15. Wed.—An arrogant conqueror.—Isa. 10:5-14. Th.—Pride before fall.—Isa. 10:15-27. Fr.—A proud fool.—Luke 12:13-21. Sat.—Humility of John.—John 1:19-34. Su.—Jesus and John.—Matt. 3:1-17.

Uzziah's Pride and Punishment.—2 Chronicles 26: 1-23. Print 26: 8-10, 15-21.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verse, 16)

SUPT.—8 And the Am'mon-ites gave gifts to Uz-zi'ah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of E'gypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly.

School.—9 Moreover Uz-zi'ah built towers in Je-ru'sa-lem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them.

10 Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Car'mel: for he loved husbandry.

15 And he made in Je-ru'sa-lem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong.

16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

17 And Az-a-ri'ah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men:

18 And they withstood Uz-zi'ah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uz-zi'ah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aa'ron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God.

19 Then Uz-zi'ah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar.

20 And Az-a-ri'ah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him.

21 And Uz-zi'ah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord: and Jo'tham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

*AMERICAN REVISION

8 And the Ammonites gave tribute to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entrance of Egypt; for he waxed exceeding strong. 9 Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them. 10 And he built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns, for he had much cattle; in the lowland also, and in the plain: and he had husbandmen and vinedressers in the mountains and in the fruitful fields; for he loved husbandry.

15 And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by skilful men, to be on the towers and upon the battlements, wherewith to shoot arrows and great stones. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong.

16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against Jehovah his God; for he went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense. 17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of Jehovah, that were valiant men: 18 and they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto Jehovah, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from Jehovah God. 19 Then Uzziah was wroth; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy brake forth in his forehead before the priests in the house of Jehovah, beside the altar of incense. 20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out quickly from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because Jehovah had smitten him. 21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a separate house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of Jehovah: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. Prov. 29:23.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**Pride is unlovely and ruinous.**

TOPIC.—**Ungoverned ambition.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Uzziah, a king of Judah. II. His successes. III. His pride. IV. His punishment.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 810.**

PLACE.—**Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—The lesson continues the study of the history of the kingdom of Judah. The last historical lesson we had was concerning the work of Joash in repairing the temple. The reign of Joash though prosperous in its early part, terminated disastrously. He forsook the worship of God after the death of Jehoiada and was led into idolatry. He was reproved by Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, and Joash ordered him to be slain. The Lord permitted the Syrians to defeat Judah, and Joash was slain by his own servants, who conspired against him because he had caused the death of Zechariah. Joash was succeeded by his son Amaziah, who was neither wholly good nor wholly bad. He was an active man and made war upon the Edomites and gained the victory over them. He became lifted up on account of his success and made war upon Israel. Judah was defeated at the battle of Beth-shemesh. The walls of Jerusalem were thrown down, much treasure was taken to Samaria and Amaziah himself was made a prisoner. He fell into idolatry, and the Jewish priests conspired against him on that account, putting him to death at Lachish, whither he had fled for safety. His body was brought back to Jerusalem for burial.

COMMENTARY.—I. UZZIAH, A KING OF JUDAH (vs. 1-3). Uzziah, also called Azariah (2 Kings 14:21), became king of Judah at the age of six-

teen years. He continued to reign during a period of fifty-two years. His reign was longer than that of any other king of Judah except Manasseh, who reigned fifty-five years, and longer than any king of Israel. The account of his long reign is comparatively brief. He came into power after the disasters that befell the kingdom during his father's time, and his work was largely one of reconstruction. The mention of his building, or repairing, Eloth (commonly called Elath) indicates the importance of that place, and also presents the young king as a zealous worker. Eloth was situated at the northern extremity of the eastern branch of the Red Sea and was important because of its relation to Judah's commerce with India, and also because of its position relatively to the rich mines of copper and turquoise of the Sinaitic peninsula.

II. HIS SUCCESSES (vs. 4-15). **4-7. The key** to Uzziah's prosperity is indicated in verses 4 and 5 "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord," and "he sought God." "As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper." He was a warrior and waged an aggressive warfare. He invaded the territory of the Philistines, the old enemy of Israel, and defeated them in their own strongholds. He also conquered the Arabians, who had injured Judah in the reign of Jehoram, and the Mehunims in the region of Mount Seir. **8. the Ammonites gave gifts**—They were in subjection to Judah and paid tribute to Uzziah. **name spread**—His successful military operations became known beyond the regions where he waged war. **strengthened himself exceedingly**—"Waxed exceeding strong."—*R. V.* In following God he became strong to defend God's chosen people. **9. built towers**—He repaired and fortified the walls of Jerusalem where they had been broken down. **corner gate**—At the northwest corner of the city. **valley gate**—The gate opening westward toward the valley of Hinnom. **at the turning of the wall**—A curve in the wall on the east. **10. towers in the desert**—For the threefold purpose of defense, of observation and of shelter to his cattle.—*J., F. & B.* **wells**—Rather cisterns to catch and retain the water which fell during the rainy season. **Carmel**—The word means "fruitful fields," and is used in that sense rather than as denoting the Carmel in the kingdom of Israel.

11-14. Uzziah was great as making improvements in his kingdom, but he gave much attention also to his army and military equipment. His army of more than three hundred thousand men was under the command of two thousand six hundred officers, and was so organized that the different companies went out to war in rotation, each division being engaged in warfare a portion of the year and spending a portion of the year at home. The army is a large one when we consider the size and resources of the country which the nation occupied. The weapons of the men of war were shields, helmets, habergeons, or coats of mail, spears, bows and slings besides engines of war. **15. engines**—These were "enormous bows or springs, set in a wooden frame-work, and so contrived as to hurl with the greatest violence both darts and stones."—*Whedon.* This is the first notice that occurs in history of the use of machines for throwing projectiles. The invention is apparently ascribed to the reign of Uzziah.—*J., F. & B.*

III. HIS PRIDE (vs. 16-19). **16. when he was strong**—His strength had come while he was walking in humility and faith before the Lord. **his heart was lifted up**—He became proud and independent, losing sight of his great mission. Comparatively few men can enjoy prosperity without their hearts being lifted up in pride. **transgressed**—It was the duty of the priests alone "to burn incense upon the altar of incense," but Uzziah in his pride desired "to be chief in all things, both in church and state." Uzziah must have deliberately determined to invade the priest's office, thus repeating the sin of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.—*Cook.* **the altar of incense**—Directions were given Moses as to its construction and position (Exod. 30:1-6), and upon it the priest was to burn incense twice daily (Exod. 30:7, 8). **17. Azariah the priest**—He was doubtless the high priest at the time, and as such it was his duty to oppose Uzziah's sacrilegious act. He and the eighty brave priests were determined that the sacred precincts of the temple should not be polluted even by a king. **18. withstood**—They could do no less and discharge their duty. **appertaineth not unto thee**—It was not a duty of his, and more than that, he was an intruder in attempting to perform an office which belonged exclusively to the priests. **go out of the sanctuary**—They used their authority even over a king. **neither....for thine honour**—Uzziah designed to appropriate a new honor to himself, but it was a disgrace to him to assume to himself priestly functions. **19. was wroth**—He was angry because any one, even a high priest, should dispute his right to do anything he wished. **a censer in his hand**—He was persistent in his purpose to burn the incense. He would show the priests that he could assume to himself whatever rights he might choose.

IV. HIS PUNISHMENT (vs. 20-23). **20. the chief priest....looked upon him**—It was the duty of the priests to pronounce upon the disease of leprosy (Lev. 13, 14). **leprous**—Leprosy was the most dreaded disease of the East. It was contagious, loathsome, incurable, fatal. **forehead**—It appeared in the most conspicuous place, so that all present could see it as a judgment from God. It came suddenly, "while he was wroth with the priests." **thrust him out**—Nothing unclean could be allowed in the temple, hence it was the duty of the priests to cast out the leprous king. **himself hasted**—Death was the penalty for invading the sacred office, and the king feared for his life. He defied men and even God, but he found that there was a mightier than he. **21. dwelt in a several house**—In a house of separation, or in an infirmary. The Jewish law forbade the leper to mingle in society. **Jotham**—Uzziah was disqualified for the position in which he had grown great. His pride had caused his complete downfall. His son became virtually the ruler of the kingdom. **22, 23.** Isaiah mentions Uzziah (Isa. 1:1), but the book referred to is lost. King Uzziah was a leper until his death and because of his disease his body was not interred in the burial-place of the kings of Judah but in a field close by.

QUESTIONS.—Who reigned in Judah after Joash? Who came next? How old was Uzziah when he began to reign? What great things did he accomplish? What is said of his moral character in the early part of his reign? What was the secret of his success? What change took place later? In what act did he commit sin? Who opposed him in that act? What calamity befell Uzziah? How long did his affliction last? Why could he no longer act as king? Who succeeded him?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. Review the important truths connected with repairing the temple in the reign of Joash. 2. The sad end of Joash. 3. Amaziah's success and failure. 4. Joash, Amaziah and Uzziah began well but failed in the end.

II. THEME.—The disastrous results of pride.

III. UZZIAH PROSPEROUS.—1. He became king while young. 2. The condition in which the kingdom was left him by his father. See 2 Chron. 25: 22-24. 3. Uzziah's activity in restoring the Jewish kingdom. 4. Victories over various nations. (1) Philistines. (2) Arabians. (3) Mehunims. (4) Ammonites. 5. His building operations. (1) Elath. (2) Fortifying Jerusalem. (3) Towers in the desert. 6. His interest in the products of the soil. 7. His ability as an organizer of the military power. 8. The implements and equipments of war. 9. The secret of his prosperity is given in verses 4 and 5.

IV. UZZIAH LIFTED UP IN PRIDE.—1. The king mistook the source of his strength. 2. He was powerful as a statesman and as a warrior. 3. He had an ambition to be supreme in religious affairs. 4. His prosperity had turned both his head and his heart. 5. He had ceased to seek the Lord. 6. The place and purpose of the altar of incense. 7. The duty of the priest to burn the incense. 8. Refer to Korah, Dathan and Abiram.

V. UZZIAH'S DOWNFALL.—1. His downfall was self-invited. 2. It was sudden. 3. The leprosy. Visible, loathsome, fatal. 4. Uzziah an outcast. 5. Note the cases of Miriam and Gehazi. 6. The lesson that was taught Nebuchadnezzar. 7. Uzziah was strong while he occupied his proper sphere, but weak when he attempted to change God's plan. 8. He was shut out from kingly functions, barred from human society and separated in his burial, because he was a leper.

Practical Survey

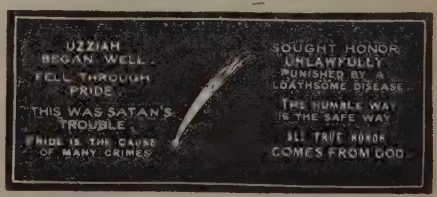
TOPIC.—Ungoverned ambition.

I. The occasion of daring sin.
II. The object of divine wrath.

I. The occasion of daring sin. During the reign of Uzziah the kingdom of Judah reached a condition of prosperity such as it had not known since the days of Solomon. This was due to the marvelous help of God. No disaster or defeat interrupted the current of his prosperity through the greater part of his reign. To Uzziah God gave more than a half century of power and wealth and their attendant advantages. It seemed as if God wished, by the abundance of his blessings, to teach Uzziah and his people that assuredly their success lay in his service. Uzziah was one of the strongest kings of Judah, a much more able and energetic ruler than his father or grandfather. He sought God's help and guidance. He honored God's prophet. He used his power for the good of his people and for the prosperity and strengthening of the nation. Except that the high places were not removed, the praise given Uzziah is unqualified. It was a great advantage to the young king that he had the loyal attachment and confidence of his people. His sincere piety was his safeguard. The virtue of his reign is traced to the influence of Zechariah. Nevertheless Uzziah had scarcely reached the acme of his power, when, as in the case of his predecessors, declension began. He was not content with his kingly power and greatness, his secular dignity and majesty. He would be first everywhere. He became filled with ideas of his own importance. He reflected with complacency on all the great deeds that he had done and all the benefits he had conferred upon the nation. His splendid career elated him and "his heart was lifted up to his own destruction." That powerful temptation which assails the strong and victorious proved too powerful for the Hebrew king. He fell beneath its force. Presumptuous pride led him to trample on the law of God and to violate the sacredness of God's holy place. In an evil hour he forgot that though he was a king he owed allegiance to a greater King. He committed the offense when his empire was at the height of its splendor and himself at the zenith of his fame, when his kingly magnificence was in full bloom, when he should have been supremely happy and contented without aspiring after more.

II. The object of divine wrath. Rightly to apprehend Uzziah's sin we must consider through what barriers he had to break before he could resolve to enter upon his sinful course. He had to disregard the direct command of Jehovah. He had to ignore the history of his people. He had to reject the teachings of his childhood. He had to discredit the actual source of his successful career. To defy and disobey one of the clearest and one of the most emphatic precepts of the Mosaic law, and to assume a prerogative which God had strictly confined to the priestly order was a step that was revolutionary in its character and tendency; that was calculated to overthrow the most sacred traditions as well as to lessen that sense of the divine separateness and sanctity which it was the first object of the great Lawgiver to fasten on the minds of his people. It was not a mere question between king and priest. It was a question whether God should continue to rule through his chosen officers over the nation or whether the king should set aside the divinely given law and practically make himself supreme. It was a daring and dangerous innovation which nothing but overgrown presumption would have attempted, and which demanded the most striking and impressive rebuke that could be administered. It was God's law that Uzziah was defying. It was from God the chastisement fell which struck his pride low. It was a penalty which disabled and disqualified him for all duties and all enjoyments of life. It worked his complete humiliation. The smitten forehead, like a detective, laid the offender under arrest and thus exposed him. He became a living evidence of the weakness of man in contending with God; of the isolation which all bring upon themselves who refuse the bounds which God's law prescribes. The spot upon Uzziah's forehead proclaimed him an object of the divine wrath. T. B. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Religion and prosperity. "As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (v. 5). Popular opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, God has promised his people temporal prosperity. "The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Deut. 28:8). The Bible abounds in promises of temporal blessing, but these promises are conditional. Uzziah was blest as long as he sought the Lord. Unfailing prosperity is guaranteed the one whose delight is in the law of the Lord (Psa. 1).

Religion and pride. "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction" (v. 16). A quaint writer of the middle ages said, "As when a city or a castle is besieged, amongst other stratagems and devices, men undermine the foundation, and blow it up with gunpowder, that being (as they think) the surest way to gain it: so the devil, laying battery to the fort of man's soul, undermines it, and puts the gunpowder of pride into it, knowing that as he himself was blown up, so will that precious fortress be easily scaled if that powder once take fire in it. And as those that fish with nets in standing rivers, where they pitch down their net, do blunder and trouble the water, that the fish may not see the net, and then with poles beat and dash the streams above, to drive the fish into the net; so Satan setting the net of disobedience, muds and troubles the heart of man by pride, and so beats him down the stream of his own affections, till he have caught him in his deadly net of destruction." If Lucifer, son of the morning, could say in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God" (Isa. 14:13), how important for the most intensely religious to obey the apostolic command, "Be not highminded, but fear" (Rom. 11:20).

Religion and punishment. "Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar" (v. 19). Spiritual pride naturally led to the sin of sacrilege. God is exceedingly jealous of the place where His glory dwelleth, and any act that insults that honor and glory meets with condign punishment. Cicero counted Pompey the Great as one of the most fortunate soldiers in the world. Yet after he had abused and robbed the temple of Jerusalem, he never prospered. Cardinal Wolsey, trying to serve his king rather than his God, was guilty of sacrilege in an aggravated degree, and came to a sudden and unhappy end. The five men who were his agents also came to shame. One killed a second in a duel and was hung for it. A third committed suicide. The fourth was reduced from wealth to abject poverty, while the fifth was slain by his enemies. Uzziah with his leprous face; Belshazzar and his thousand lords, praising the gods of Babylon, while the hand writes on the wall; the Savior with his scourge of small cords driving out the sacrilegious buyers and sellers; each is a standing object-lesson of God's punishment of insult to his house and glory. "I am the Lord: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images" (Isa. 42:8). G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The proud are in danger of falling.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

UZZIAH { PROSPEROUS
PROUD
PUNISHED

Review. Try to fix the missionary lessons of the last two weeks in the minds of the children by drawing out answers to the questions, Who? Where? Why? What? Blackboard outlines embracing these questions and their answers can not fail to make an impression upon the class. There is another review that is essential to the proper presentation of to-day's lesson. It is the one about Joash and his repairing the temple. Two lessons should be emphasized. One is reverence and care for God's house; the other is cheerful giving for the cause of God. It will be necessary to tell the story of the closing years of the life of Joash, a sad ending for a life so well begun, and also the story of Amaziah who followed Joash.

Uzziah's prosperity. If you make use of the above blackboard outline, you can readily explain the word prosperity, by saying that a newsboy is prosperous if he succeeds in selling his papers and takes good care of his money, or the pupil is prosperous who learns his lessons carefully and recites them well. Write on the board three things that Uzziah did that indicated his prosperity. He repaired city walls, he drove back enemies and he helped the people. Do not fail to show why he prospered. There are two expressions in this lesson, in verses 4 and 5, that explain it. "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord," is one; and the other is, "As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper." It will be easy to teach the latter sentence to the children so that they can repeat it to you.

Uzziah's pride. If the king had gone on as he began he would have been one of the greatest rulers in Jewish history. It would have been well for the nation if he had continued to seek the Lord and humbly work for the welfare of the people. Show what danger there is in forgetting God. Tell the story of Nebuchadnezzar who boasted of his own power and greatness (Dan. 4:30), and show how he was humbled. More than seven hundred years ago there was a student at Oxford, named Simon Tournay, who was unusually bright and excelled all his fellow students. He believed that he was the equal or the superior of all the greatest men of the past, so proud did he become. He later became such an idiot that he did not know his letters. In a few words explain how Uzziah attempted to perform the duties of the priests which the law forbade. He felt that he could do anything he chose regardless of God's law.

Uzziah's punishment. The king's pride became his ruin. The priests tried to show him the wrong he was doing in burning incense in the temple. Boys and girls sometimes become determined to have their own way. When the king was opposed by the priests, he became angry. Pride and anger are sins that often go together.

LESSON XI

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Dec. 6.—Jehovah yearns over backsliding Israel.—Hosea 11:1-11. Tu.—Love and apostasy.—Jer. 2:1-13. Wed.—Encouragement to repentance.—Jer. 3:11-18. Th.—A sinful nation.—Isa. 1:2-9. Fr.—Glorious restoration.—Isa. 35:1-10. Sat.—Lament over backsliding Jerusalem.—Matt. 23:29-39. Su.—Jesus the giver of rest.—Matt. 11:20-30.

Jehovah Yearns over Backsliding Israel.—Hosea 11: 1-11.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 8, 9)

SUPT.—1 When Is'ra-el was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of E'gypt.

School.—2 As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Ba'a-lim, and burned incense to graven images.

3 I taught E'phra-im also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.

4 I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

5 He shall not return into the land of E'gypt, but the As-syr'i-an shall be his king, because they refused to return.

6 And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels.

7 And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.

8 How shall I give thee up, E'phra-im? how shall I deliver thee, Is'ra-el? how shall I make thee as Ad'mah? how shall I set thee as Ze-bo'im? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

9 I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy E'phra-im: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.

10 They shall walk after the Lord: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.

11 They shall tremble as a bird out of E'gypt, and as a dove out of the land of As-syr'i-a: and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord.

*AMERICAN REVISION

1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. 2 The more the prophets called them, the more they went from them: they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. 3 Yet I taught Ephraim to walk; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them. 4 I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that lift up the yoke on their jaws; and I laid food before them.

5 They shall not return into the land of Egypt; but the Assyrian shall be their king, because they refused to return to me. 6 And the sword shall fall upon their cities, and shall consume their bars, and devour them, because of their own counsels. 7 And my people are bent on backsliding from me: though they call them to him that is on high, none at all will exalt him.

8 How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I cast thee off, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboiim? my heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. 9 I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not come in wrath. 10 They shall walk after Jehovah, who will roar like a lion; for he will roar, and the children shall come trembling from the west. 11 They shall come trembling as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria; and I will make them to dwell in their houses, saith Jehovah.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love. Hosea 11:4.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord seeks to win those who have forsaken him.**

TOPIC.—**Israel's history.**

OUTLINE.—**I. God's tenderness toward Israel. II. Judgments upon Israel. III. Mercy promised.**

TIME.—**About B. C. 735.**

PLACE.—**Kingdom of Israel.**

INTRODUCTION.—Little is known of the ancestry of the prophet Hosea. He was the son of Beeri, but we are not told to what tribe he belonged, although it seems certain that he was a native of the northern kingdom from the character of his writings and from the fact that he was a prophet to the kingdom of Israel. There is a Jewish tradition that he belonged to the tribe of Issachar. From the first verse of his prophecy we learn that he prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel. It is uncertain how long his prophetic career continued. Some place it as high as sixty years, while others incline to think it was much less. Hosea dwells upon the sinfulness of Israel, especially with respect to idolatry, and calls the nation to repentance with the promise of full forgiveness on condition that they return to him. A reading of the prophecy reveals to us the fact that the prophet had married a young woman, named Gomer, with whom he was for a time happy, but later he learned that she was unfaithful. His love for her led him to seek to turn her from her evil ways, but to no purpose. She went away and through her sinful course became a slave. Hosea even then did not give her up, but bought her back from slavery and succeeded in restoring her to himself. Under this figure the prophet represents the love of God for Israel, his chosen people, and although they had been unfaithful to him, he had sought over and over again to bring them back to himself, with the promise that he would "love them freely." There is a pathetic tenderness that runs through the whole book, which reveals the character of the prophet.

COMMENTARY.—I. GOD'S TENDERNESS TOWARD ISRAEL (vs. 1-4). This chapter gives a very pathetic representation of God's tender and affectionate regard for Israel, by metaphors chiefly borrowed from the love of mothers toward their tender offspring. From this, occasion is taken to reflect on their ungrateful return to the divine goodness, and to denounce against them the judgments of the Almighty. But suddenly and unexpectedly the prospect changes. Beams of mercy break from the clouds just now fraught with vengeance. God, to speak in the language of men, feels the relentings of a tender parent; his bowels yearn, his mercy triumphs, his re-

bellious child shall yet be pardoned. As the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he will employ his power to save his people, he will call his children from the land of their captivity; and, as doves, they will fly to him, a faithful and a holy people.—*Clarke.*

1. when Israel was a child—Reference is made to the early period of the existence of Israel as a nation. **I loved him**—This is an expression of God's tender love for his children. God with his infinite wealth of affection lavishes his love upon humanity. **called my son out of Egypt**—The Lord brought Israel, whom he calls his son, out of bondage into the land which he had promised to them. This deliverance is here mentioned to show how greatly Jehovah loved his people and wrought miracle after miracle in their behalf. **2. as they called them, so they went from them**—"The more the prophets called them, the more they went from them."—*R. V.* This translation gives the sense more clearly than the Authorized Version. In the opening verses of the lesson we have in brief form the entire moral history of Israel. Here we see God's enduring love for his people, their repeated departures from him and his persistent efforts to draw them to himself. He sent one prophet after another to them to warn them of the results of their unbelief and disobedience, yet they were stubborn and did not permanently return to him. **sacrificed unto Baalim**—Baal-worship had strong attractions for the Israelites. They were a religious people and seemed to desire gods that appealed to their senses. Their hearts were corrupt, hence they were attracted by the sensuality of this heathen worship. In this they were violating the first two commandments. **burned incense to graven images**—Offering sacrifices and burning incense were two prominent forms of worshiping Jehovah prescribed by God himself. The Israelites employed these forms in worshiping idols. "Verses 1, 2 aptly describe the religious history from the Exodus to the days of Hosea; on the one hand, the intense love and care of Jehovah, on the other, the persistent rebellion of the people."—*Whedon.*

3. I taught Ephraim also to go—Because Ephraim was one of the powerful tribes of Israel, the Lord by his prophet calls the whole nation by that name. This verse shows how tenderly the Lord dealt with this people. Israel was a child and Jehovah taught the infant nation to walk. **taking them by their arms**—"I took them on my arms."—*R. V.* The figure is that of a father helping his child to walk, and when it was tired, he took it up in his arms and carried it. **they knew not**—The Israelites were so taken up with their own ways that they did not recognize that the merciful and mighty hand of the Lord was upon them to bring to them the greatest possible good. **4. I drew them with cords of a man**—The figure here also shows the Lord's tenderness toward his people. He did not use violent methods in restraining them as one might deal with unruly cattle, but he drew them with "cords of a man," or with "bands of love." He assisted them with their burdens. **take off the yoke**—The humane driver loosens the yoke occasionally in order to relieve his oxen. "The manner of easing the yoke to which the prophet refers is not quite clear, since we do not know sufficiently the form of the yoke." **I laid meat unto them**—I placed food before them. The figure shows impressively God's compassion for Israel. "An appropriate image of God's deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian yoke, and of his feeding them in the wilderness."—*J., F. & B.*

II. JUDGMENTS UPON ISRAEL (vs. 5-7). **5. he shall not return into....Egypt**—I have brought them [Israel] thence already, with the design that the nation should never return thither again: but, as they have sinned, and forfeited my favor and protection, they shall go to Assyria; and this, because they refused to return to me.—*Clarke.* Although they should not return to Egypt, yet they would go into Egypt-like bondage or captivity in Assyria. **6. the sword shall abide on his cities**—The sword is mentioned as a symbol of war. From the time of Jeroboam II to the captivity of Israel under Hoshea by the Assyrians, insurrections and wars were the lot of Israel. **his branches**—The tribes and cities of Israel. **because of their own counsels**—Israel had been fully instructed as to their duty to obey and worship the true God, but instead of being devoted to him, they gave themselves over to the worship of idols. **7. bent to backsliding from me**—The condition of Israel was deplorable. With them it was not a matter of forsaking the Lord once only, but it was their fixed disposition to leave him. Their frequent backslidings from God had resulted in a "bent" in that direction. **though they called them to the most High**—Although the prophets called the people of Israel upward from their degrading idolatry to serve the Lord, they would not respond to the call. They were "bent to backsliding."

III. MERCY PROMISED (vs. 8-11). **8. how shall I give thee up**—Jehovah's appeal to his people is most pathetic. He loves them and clings to them in spite of their waywardness. His love would spare them, but justice demands their punishment. Judgments must be visited upon them. **how shall I deliver thee**—"How shall I cast thee off?"—*R. V.* **as Admah....as Zeboim**—These two cities were near Sodom and Gomorrah and were destroyed with the cities of the plain (Deut. 29:23). **mine heart is turned within me**—In deep sorrow and compassion. **my repentings are kindled together**—"My compassions are kindled together."—*R. V.* God's compassion toward his people is emphasized. This has been called "the greatest passage in Hosea—deepest, if not highest, of this book—the breaking forth of that exhaustless mercy of the Most High which no sin of man can bar back nor wear out." **9. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger**—Mercy is triumphant. God will spare the nation for a time, giving additional opportunity for them to repent. **I am God, and not man**—His forbearance keeps him from inflicting speedy punishment upon them, as man might be inclined to do. **I will not enter into the city**—"I will not come in wrath."—*R. V.* **10. they shall walk after the Lord**—The people were to recognize God's call and follow him. **he shall roar like a lion**—The Lord would speak in majesty and power to gather after him his scattered people. **from the west**—Literally, from the sea; that is, from remote places. **11. bird out of Egypt....Assyria**—The flight of birds denotes swiftness.

QUESTIONS.—Who was Hosea? During the reigns of what kings did he prophesy? Concerning what nation did he prophesy? When was Israel "a child"? What deliverance is mentioned? In what way had Israel chiefly transgressed God's law? What judgments were pronounced upon Israel? What expressions in the lesson show God's tenderness toward Israel? What hope is held out for Israel?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The prophet Hosea. (1) His nation. (2) His ancestry. (3) The period in which he lived. (4) The length of his prophetic career. 2. Hosea was a prophet to the northern kingdom. 3. Courage required to declare God's messages. 4. The need for men to-day who have deep convictions.

II. THEME.—God's love for the erring.

III. THE DIVINE COMPASSION.—1. The childhood of the Israelitish nation. (1) Israel, God's chosen people. (2) Israel in Egypt. 2. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt. 3. The tender care of Jehovah for Israel. 4. The figure of a father teaching a child to walk. 5. Israel was unappreciative of the favors which God bestowed upon the nation. 6. The figure of a farmer caring kindly for his oxen. 7. The efforts which the Lord puts forth in behalf of those who wander away from him. 8. The Spirit makes appeals to the backslider.

IV. JUDGMENTS PRONOUNCED.—1. God is just, as well as compassionate. 2. In spite of God's tender love for Israel and his mighty works in their behalf, they departed from him and served Baal. 3. Because of their persistent idolatry, judgments would fall upon them. 4. The captivity of Israel by the Assyrians is foretold. 5. The sword should fall upon the nation.

V. A PROMISE OF MERCY.—1. Because of sin, judgment must fall; but there is hope of better things later. 2. The touching language of verse 8. 3. Israel will yet heed the call of Jehovah. 4. The gospel is for the Jew and the Gentile. 5. The future of Israel.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—Israel's history.

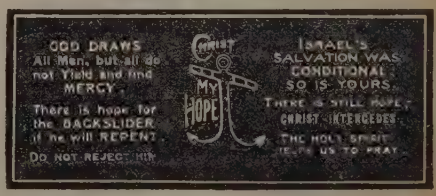
I. A record of divine forbearance.
II. A record of declension from God.

I. A record of divine forbearance. In Hosea's writings Israel is portrayed as a highly favored people, a signally ungrateful race and a righteously punished nation. God had granted Israel special revelation. He admitted them into exceptional relationship with himself as his people. He adopted many ways to communicate his thoughts and reveal his will unto them. In this lesson God is presented in the character of a father. His long-suffering and patience toward sinners, his unwillingness to punish and his readiness to forgive even in Hosea's time, show that the divine patience was exercised in Israel's behalf. The heavenly Father's character and the modes of his dealing with humanity are clearly revealed in Israel's history, proving that he is not unmindful of the welfare of his children. Jehovah had been to the Hebrew people, a loving Father, a gentle nurse, a kindly monitor, a considerate Master. His love for Israel had been unmistakable during the infancy of the nation, and even more wonderful in the time of Ephraim's moral decrepitude and premature decay. Amid Hosea's strong denunciations of sin his description of the tenderness of divine discipline for wayward men has been compared to a sweet song in the midst of a wild storm. There is something wonderfully touching in his representation of God's affection and compassion toward the nation of his choice. As a father, distressed at heart because of his son's waywardness and disaffection, he recalls the period of that son's childhood when parental care and love watched over, upheld and guided him. Now that Israel had done wickedly in departing from God, in the midst of upbraiding and rebuke, the Lord appealed to the memory of earlier and better days. Israel had become a great nation because of the divine care which overshadowed them in feeble infancy and made them conscious of new powers and possibilities. A reminder of merciful interposition and mighty deliverance was a fit summons to submission and reconciliation. It was a divine appeal. Israel had received gracious and undeserved, but generous and forbearing, treatment from the God of nations. He had loved them, emancipated them, refreshed and fed them. The Omnipotent became as a nurse to Israel. His instructions ever exceeded his corrections.

II. A record of declension from God. Over against the rich display of God's mercy, love and long-suffering, is portrayed Israel's refusal to hearken to God's call, as well as their pursuit of sin. Our lesson is the old story of God's love and man's rebellion. To Israel God was no longer the object of worship or the source of authority. Baal was worshiped in the high places and Astarte in the groves. The people talked familiarly of their history, but there was no gratitude in the heart to mold and fashion life into submissive obedience to the law of God. Israel made a shameful return for all God's goodness to them. They turned away from duty. They went farther into sin, the more they were warned. Sensuous pleasures had displaced their devotion to God. Their knowledge had not permeated their character and life. It had not given a bent to their conduct. They were guilty of folly, ingratitude and treachery. Their wickedness invited God's justice. Their suffering evoked his mercy. Forgetful of all that God had wrought for them and all they owed to him, Israel had left his service, renounced his worship and had given themselves up to the most shameful idolatries. Mercies or judgments seemed to be in vain. They rebelled against a just and rightful Sovereign. They robbed a good and gracious Master. They were ungrateful to a most kind Friend and Benefactor. They despised the richest mercy and tenderest compassion. The nation had proved altogether unworthy of its early mercies. Their covenant God had again and again interposed in their behalf to succor, to heal and to save them. Many and urgent counsels and entreaties had been addressed to Israel regardless of their vacillation. By the memory of their great redemption from Egypt their God called for obedience and devotion. God used the rod of discipline to correct and reclaim, the rod of retribution to punish and restore the offenders. There is an infinite, compassionate reluctance with God to give man up to his own folly and destruction.

T. B. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

Inviting love. "Called my son out of Egypt" (v. 1). God called his people when they were among the brick-kilns of Egypt, and smarting under the task-master's lash. So he calls to-day from the service of sin. Jesus says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).

Adopting love. God called him his son (v. 1). The slaves of Pharaoh were adopted as sons of God. In the prison house of Egypt God found the material out of which to make sons of light. In the muck and mire of sin he finds the diamonds to adorn the glory-day of Jesus Christ. It is counted a great thing in a republic to call one of the common citizens to the highest executive office, and one is always called who is supposed to be worthy in character; but God stoops to make slaves the partners of his throne.

Tender love. "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms" (v. 3). What a picture of the tenderness of God's dealing with his people! As a mother takes her child by the arm and lovingly and carefully directs each step, so the Lord leads his people. "I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?"

Entreating love. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?" (v. 8). The poet says, "Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn." How long God waits before that smile of entreating love is withdrawn! Sin piles on sin; rebellion is added to rebellion; stubbornness becomes more stubborn; yet God waits for us to repent. He waits with infinite compassion.

Incarnate love. "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love" (Golden Text). A number of years ago a man, who was a minister, owned a farm some distance from the railroad. His son managed the business in the absence of the father. One fall the son marketed a large amount of grain. When the time came for his return, he failed to appear. At last, the father becoming alarmed, went to the city to see what had become of him. He found the son had received the money for the grain. Then he began to fear that his boy had been murdered and robbed. At last, with the aid of a detective, he tracked him to a gambling den, where he found that he had gambled away the whole of his money. In hope of winning it back again he had sold the team and lost that money also. He was ashamed to go home and meet his father, and he fled. The father knew what it all meant. He knew that the boy thought he would be very angry with him. That father arranged his business and started after his boy. He went from town to town, from city to city. He would get the ministers to let him preach, and at the close he would tell his story. He would describe his boy, and say, "If you ever hear of him or see him, will you not write me?" At last he found himself in San Francisco, and advertised in the papers that he would preach at a certain church on a certain day. At the close he told his story in hope that the boy might have seen the advertisement, and come to the church. After the audience had passed out, a young man came out from under the gallery and started toward the pulpit. The father recognized him and ran to embrace him. The son wanted to confess his wrong, but the father would not listen, but forgave him freely and took him home. G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—God desires us for his service.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

ISRAEL { LOVED / SINFUL / PUNISHED / RESTORED

God's love for Israel. God sent a message to sinful Israel. He tells of his love for the nation. Either by a series of questions or by direct narration bring out the story of the Hebrew race. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph and Moses are names prominent in the history. Note that the Lord looked upon Israel in Egypt as a child and he brought him out of bondage. Ask the class to tell how little children move about on the floor and how they learn to walk. The Lord cared as tenderly for his people Israel as a father ever cared for his little child. Recall how God provided for the children of Israel in the wilderness, giving them food and water, and keeping their clothing and shoes from wearing out. Note another illustration the prophet uses to show God's care for his people. It is that of a driver who is gentle with his oxen and cares for them kindly.

A sinful nation. Since the Lord was thus loving and compassionate toward Israel, they ought to have obeyed and loved him. Let the class give reasons why we should all love and serve him. Israel were ungrateful toward God and disobeyed him in going into idolatry. They broke the commandments which he gave them. Refer to the first and second commandments, and show that the people did not keep them. Call out from the children some of the things that people do who serve the Lord. They do his will in all things, keeping his commandments, giving themselves fully to him and worshiping him. Call attention to some of the sins that children are liable to be led into, and show how displeasing to God all sin is. Jesus saves those who penitently and trustingly come to him.

Israel punished. Let the class tell how parents sometimes punish their children. Have the children seen police stations, jails or prisons? Do they know what kinds of people are kept there? They are those who have committed crimes and are there as a punishment. Tell the story of the destruction of Sodom for the sins of the people. Israel was to be punished for their turning away from the true God. They were to have many wars, and at last they were to be taken into captivity in Assyria. In the story of the children of Israel, with all their departures from God, with all the warnings that were given to them, with all their repentings and with all the punishments administered to them, we have a type of a human life in its relation to God.

Israel restored. Read verse 8 and note how much God clung to Israel. After they had been punished he would give them their liberty. They would then listen to him and be obedient. A child who has been punished for some wrong act and is penitent is humbled and becomes submissive and obedient. Parents love their children even if they do punish them. They punish their children for their good.

LESSON XII

HOME READINGS.—Mon., Dec. 13.—The song of the angels.—Luke 2:1-20. Tu.—The Benedictus.—Luke 1:67-79. Wed.—Universal peace.—Isa. 11:1-10. Th.—The Prince of peace.—Isa. 9:1-7. Fr.—The reign of peace.—Psa. 72. Sat.—To seek and to save.—Luke 19:1-10. Su.—The gospel of salvation.—Rom. 1:8-17.

The Song of the Angels—Christmas Lesson.—Luke 2: 1-20. Print 2: 8-20.

AUTHORIZED VERSION (Memory Verses, 13, 14)

SUPT.—8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

School.—9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of Da'vid a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Beth'le-hem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mar'y, and Jo'seph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mar'y kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

*AMERICAN REVISION

8 And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. 9 And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: 11 for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

15 And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. 18 And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

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SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—The angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Luke 2: 10.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The gospel is as good news now as ever in the past.**

TOPIC.—**A world message.**

OUTLINE.—**I. Christ born in Bethlehem. II. The announcement of his birth. III. The shepherds' visit to the child Jesus.**

TIME.—**B. C. 5.**

PLACE.—**Bethlehem, five miles south of Jerusalem.**

INTRODUCTION.—Luke gives the most complete account of the events connected with the birth of Christ of all the writers of the Gospels. He tells of the parentage and birth of John the Baptist, who was to be the forerunner of our Lord. He gives the genealogy of Jesus, tracing the line of descent back to Adam, thus showing his connection with the entire race of man. He gives a description of the visit of the angel to Mary when he announced to her that she should be the mother of the Christ. Luke tells us more about the childhood of Jesus than does any other of the evangelists. The interest of childhood and of the whole world in the birth of Christ does not diminish as the years come and go. At every Christmas season our attention is expressly called to this event, and in our hearts we exult in the fact that he came to bring salvation and comfort to the whole world.

COMMENTARY.—I. CHRIST BORN IN BETHLEHEM (vs. 1-7). The fulness of time had come when Christ was to appear on earth. He was to be born in Bethlehem, as prophesied by Micah (5:2), but the home of Joseph and Mary was in Nazareth. The decree of Cæsar Augustus, that all the citizens of his realm should be enrolled in their ancestral cities, made it necessary for Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem, for they were both of the house of David. While they were there Christ was born. The number of strangers in Bethlehem on this occasion was so great that Joseph and Mary were obliged to seek lodgings in the khan, or caravansary, which is "a large, substantial, square building, surrounded by a lofty wall. Passing through a strong gateway, the guests enter a large court, the sides of which are divided into numerous arched compartments open in front. In the center is a spacious raised platform used for sleeping upon. Between the outer wall and the compartments are wide vaulted arcades extending around the entire building where the beasts of burden are placed." It is very doubtful about the cavern under the Church of the Nativity being the place of Christ's birth, although tradition declares that it is. It is clear that near there Christ was born. Bethlehem is now a city of ten or twelve thousand inhabitants, and it has

continued its existence through all these centuries. Great numbers of Christians visit Bethlehem every year to see the locality where Christ was born and where the angel of the Lord made the announcement to the shepherds.

II. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS BIRTH (vs. 8-14). **8. shepherds abiding in the field**—As in the time of David the raising of sheep was an important industry, so also in Christ's time it was a common occupation, and even now shepherds and their sheep are to be seen almost everywhere. **keeping watch over their flock by night**—It is still common for shepherds to spend the night in the fields with their flocks. The people of Palestine live in villages and not in the open country as in America, and they often care for their sheep in the fields at night throughout the year, protecting them from wild beasts and from robbers. In December the grass is green and the weather pleasant in that country, and the season would be no argument against Christ's birth having taken place in that month. **9. angel of the Lord**—This heavenly messenger was sent on an important errand. It was to make the announcement to the world of Christ's birth. Many times from the announcement to Zacharias to the ascension of our Lord angels came to earth as messengers from heaven. **glory of the Lord**—A heavenly radiance appeared about the angel and enveloped the shepherds. This was the symbol of the divine presence, power and holiness as shown by the scriptures. **they were sore afraid**—They were taken completely by surprise. The appearance of the angel was so unusual, and the scene so startling, that they were awestruck.

10. fear not—Words of encouragement that have been spoken again and again to God's people and to those who desire to become such. "Fear not" is an exhortation repeated upward of fifty times in the Bible. **good tidings**—Good news producing "great joy." **to all people**—The gospel is for all nations in all ages. It came first to the Jews, but its blessings are for all mankind. **11. unto you**—Jesus came as the shepherds' Savior, as he came to all the world. **city of David**—Bethlehem. **Christ**—The anointed One, the Messiah. **Lord**—The King of kings and Lord of lords. **12. a sign**—That they were making a true announcement. **ye shall find**—They would recognize the child Jesus from his clothing and his position. **swaddling clothes**—In the East it is the custom now, as it was in those days, to wrap the infant round and round with a long strip of cloth three or four inches wide, from the neck to the toes. This announcement came to the shepherds as they were attending to their every-day duties. An angelic visit was received by Zacharias while he was serving in the temple.

13. suddenly—Immediately after the announcement made by the angel to the shepherds. **a multitude**—Christ's advent to earth was of infinite importance and was attended by the presence of heavenly beings. "The whole host of heaven was praising God, not merely that portion of it which was visible to the shepherds." They came to do honor to him who took upon him human nature that he might redeem and save humanity. **praising God**—The angels understood something of the work that Jesus was to accomplish and they praised God for this glorious manifestation of his infinite love. **14. glory to God in the highest**—Honor and praise are ascribed to him who is the source of all excellence, who dwells in the highest heaven. Peace is declared as coming to men, as between God and man and between man and man. The angels understood the significance of Christ's coming to earth. They ascribed glory to God, and knew that men were to be blessed through Christ's ministry among them. More clearly than we can perceive it, did they realize how much was involved in his advent as the Babe of Bethlehem. We are under obligation to join the angels in praise for Christ's incarnation.

III. THE SHEPHERDS' VISIT TO THE CHILD JESUS (vs. 15-20). **15. let us now go**—The gracious words of the angel, and the chorus of the heavenly host had deeply impressed their minds and they were determined to learn more of the blessed news of the coming of Christ. Such a message as they had received called for immediate action. **the Lord hath made known**—They accepted the angel's words as a message from God. **16. came with haste**—They were seeking Jesus. They were eager and determined. Such a search for Jesus is always successful. **17. made known**—The events were so full of promise and blessing that they would have done wrong in not telling the good news. **the saying**—That Christ the Lord, the Savior, was born, and that peace and good-will toward men had been proclaimed. **18. wondered**—The message appealed profoundly to the hearers. The hope of the ages was being realized. The expectation of the nations was being fulfilled. The people did not at the time comprehend the full import of the good news. They thought it meant national deliverance and prosperity, and no doubt had vague notions of spiritual blessings, but the news then published is being borne down the ages and carried to the remote regions of the earth, and yet it causes those who receive it to wonder even to-day.

19. pondered them in her heart—Mary must have thought of the words of the angel to her (Luke 1:32, 33), and of the words of the angel to her husband (Matt. 1:21), and, with the message just received from the lips of the shepherds, she had sufficient reason for pondering them. She was unable to foresee all that was to come upon her and her child, but she knew there was a great future for him. **20. the shepherds returned**—They received the message, believed it and were filled with holy gladness. As the heavenly messenger had come to them, while attending to their ordinary work, so, when the supernatural manifestation was over, they returned to their usual employment. God made shepherds his agents in declaring the wonderful message, instead of entrusting the duty to kings or even to priests. The humble station of Mary, the manger cradle, the shepherd messengers, all attest the humility of the Prince of peace, while the angelic announcements and the chorus of the heavenly host declare his exalted origin. We can profitably let our minds dwell upon the whole scene of the angel's announcement, the adoration of the angels, the visit of the shepherds to the temporary abode of Joseph, Mary and the Christ-child, the gladness of the shepherds and the spread of the glorious news.

QUESTIONS.—Where was Jesus born? Where was the home of Joseph and Mary? To whom did the angel announce the birth of Christ? Who joined the angel after this announcement? What words did this company say? After the angels returned to heaven what did the shepherds do? Whom did they find? What did the shepherds do after they had found Jesus? How were those who heard the report of the shepherds affected? What were the shepherds doing on their return?

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. Had we not chosen to present a Christmas lesson to-day, our study would have been the captivity of Israel as given in 2 Kings 17: 1-18. 2. Israel's fall was the result of the nation's long-continued disregard for God's law. 3. The kingdom of Israel began under Jeroboam in a revolt and ended under Hoshea in its destruction. 4. We turn from this dark picture to study the account of Christ's birth.

II. THEME.—Christ's birth brought joy to the world.

III. CHRIST'S BIRTH.—1. The world's need of the Savior. 2. The ancestry of Jesus. 3. The incarnation. 4. The date of his birth. When the mode of reckoning time from the birth of Christ was adopted, a mistake was made in placing that event four years too late; hence Christ was born four years before the date from which we reckon his birth.

IV. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS BIRTH.—1. The appearance of the angel to the shepherds. 2. The message. (1) Comforting. (2) Gladdening. 3. The nature and work of him whose birth was announced. 4. The fulness of time had come.

V. THE ANGELS' TRIBUTE.—1. An exalted mission. 2. A glorious company. 3. The heavenly host knew Jesus and they knew conditions on earth. 4. Those who truly know Christ exalt and adore him. 5. Analyze the tribute of the angels. 6. They could not use language that would exalt his mission too highly.

VI. THE VISIT OF THE SHEPHERDS.—1. They believed the message. 2. Their faith made them swift. 3. They sought for Jesus. 4. They recognized him when they found him. 5. They were too simple-hearted to reject him because they saw no display of earthly magnificence.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**A world message.**

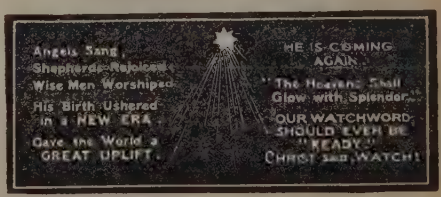
I. Ascribed glory to God.
II. Proclaimed peace to men.

I. Ascribed glory to God While men were moving from all quarters in response to the decree of Cæsar Augustus, the angels of heaven were gathering around the world's greatest event. The emperor's object was to fill his coffers. The purpose of God was to fulfil his ancient promise. A minute prophecy, so many times imperiled in the course of centuries, was at last to be fulfilled. The wisdom of God overruled the action of men for higher and nobler ends than they anticipated. The decree of the Roman emperor was subordinate to the decree of the King of kings. Ages had rolled by since the first promise of a Messiah was given. Saints had waited. Types had prefigured the event. Prophets had foretold his coming. When all preparation was complete, the divine prophecy was fulfilled. Christ's coming was the pivotal event of the world's history. It was only in the Babe of Bethlehem that the whole of God's character shone forth, that men might not only find him and bow before him, but trust in him and love him as one who could be touched with the feeling of their infirmities. The time, the place, the tidings and the listeners were all in unison. It was to men lowly and obscure, without worldly place or power that the first proclamation was made. Angels announced his advent with strains of highest rapture. They sang of Christ and the salvation which he came into the world to accomplish. The Son of God became incarnate that he might reveal the Father; that he might exemplify human nature; that he might take away sin and make man partaker of the divine nature. The world was little affected by this event so essential to its welfare.

II. Proclaimed peace to men. There was no doubting the angel's message. The music of that night was not a dirge, but an anthem. There was no dissenting voice in that harmony. The song consisted in a proclamation of peace and good-will, conditions perfectly consistent with the glory of God. Sin had created war in every heart; between man and man; between man and God. At the bidding of the angel the shepherds left their flocks and hastened to Bethlehem to verify the good tidings. They had received the heavenly manifestation with becoming reverence and awe. They accepted the message as the first sermon of the gospel dispensation. Their consternation ended in exultation. They praised God for the realization of what they had been told. Though unlettered men, they could speak from experience. They had heard the voice from heaven. They had seen the young child. They were witnesses to the reality of Christ's humanity and the perfection of his example. The fact bespoke the self-sacrificing power of divine love. It was an event of supreme interest in the world, outweighing all other events of history, having to do with all time and all men. They verified the vision like earnest and consistent men. They went in the spirit of earnest consecration, never doubting the correctness of the information given through the ministration of angels. They not only tested and proclaimed the truth concerning Christ, but they exemplified it in their conduct. God knew whom to choose when he opened heaven,—warm-hearted keepers of sheep. It was personal experience that fitted them for service and inspired them with true enthusiasm. Their hearts were touched with love for the new-born King and their souls were fired with the spirit of true brotherhood. They diligently improved the light they received. They freely confessed their faith and joy before men. An extraordinary privilege had been granted them. It cheered them in future toil. A new day had dawned in the world's history. The old era had passed; the new had begun. Only angels knew what a revelation had been wrought by the power of God. With Mary the current of her soul flowed far too deep to give expression to its emotions. She had received the direct, personal, living revelation of the purpose of God. She had acknowledged the salvation which he had prepared through her for his people. She treasured every new unfolding with modest womanly discretion.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

In the Christ-child we have the expression of the divine plan of work. Those plans are along lines of progression and development, and always, so far as possible, in harmony with those laws we are apt to call natural. Chemical changes are progressive. Life is progressive. Revelation has been progressive. So Christ is born and grows from youth to manhood, increasing "in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (ch. 2:52).

In the Christ-child we have the exaltation of parenthood and child relationship. Motherhood, which has ever dwelt in the holiest of the holies, has been glorified and infinitely dignified by the birth of the Christ. Infancy has been rendered more innocent and pure by the Babe of Bethlehem, while youth has been ennobled since the so-called carpenter's son was subject to his parents in the home at Nazareth. The obedient Son of the Highest became the obedient son of the lowly. The simple order, the obedient reverence, the faithful service rendered by child and parents in that Jewish home is heaven's object-lesson to the world of the ideal home life.

In the Christ-child we have the story of a Savior. It is not the biography of a budding man. In gathering up the fragments which complete the biography of a great man, the childhood and youth form no inconsiderable part. The channels of influence and heredity must flow through infancy. But not so with the Christ-child. He is to be the Savior of men. So the record notes the miraculous incidents connected with his birth, his visit to Jerusalem, and passes over the rest in silence until that silence is broken by the clarion cry of John the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

In the Christ-child we have the warp and woof of literature and history. "A Christmas Carol" of Charles Dickens; the "Christmas Eve" of Robert Browning; "The First Christmas Tree" of Henry Van Dyke, are but samples of the ways in which the story of Christ is woven into literature. The sculptured figure of the "Christ of the Andes" is mutely eloquent with the angels' refrain, reverberated over the Judean hills two thousand years ago, "On earth peace, good will toward men" (v. 14). The beautiful purity of the virgin mother and her infant child has so stirred the creative imagination of great artists that they have dipped their brushes in oil and thrown upon the delicate face of canvas the appealing story of the Christ-child.

In the Christ-child we have the love of God revealed. In the Christ-child we have the love of sacrifice, sacrificing the glory of eternal Sonship for the ignominious death on the cross. In the Christ-child we have love in self-denial,—he who was rich in himself, having not where to lay his head. In the Christ-child we have love in action, seeking out and finding, to comfort and soothe, the crushed sons and daughters of earth. In the Christ-child we have love in suffering, the suffering of the Christ as he pours out his soul for the transgressors. In the Christ-child we have love in consummation, prophetically told, practically exemplified in his life, prospectively in view of the time when he shall be set "in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—Jesus came into this world to bring peace and joy.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

JESUS { Born in Bethlehem / His birth made known / Visited by shepherds

PEACE ON EARTH

A beginning. Inasmuch as we are just now closing the study of the Old Testament for the present, it will be well to tell briefly the story of the fall and captivity of the kingdom of Israel. The destruction of the nation came about because of Israel's rejection of God. Impress upon the class the necessity of loving and serving the Lord. Distress and sorrow come to those who disobey him. We turn from the dark picture of Israel's sin and destruction to the bright picture of the coming of Jesus into the world. We can scarcely realize how dark the world was before Jesus came.

Jesus born at Bethlehem. This is a lesson in which the children are greatly interested. Bethlehem was the city where David lived. Joseph and Mary were descendants of David, but lived at Nazareth, a long distance away. They came to Bethlehem and while they were there Christ was born. The khan where Joseph and Mary and Jesus were was a large building, where people could lodge, and a portion of it was used for beasts. There was no room in the guest-chambers of private houses, therefore this family found a place in the public khan. The children can tell where the infant Jesus was laid.

The angel's message. Give a description of the shepherds who were keeping their flocks out in the fields. They had to watch them, so that robbers would not steal them and wild beasts would not kill them. They were startled when an angel came to them. It was bright all around the angel and the shepherds, and we do not wonder that they were much afraid. Can the children tell where the angel came from and why he came to the shepherds? They were glad to hear the angel tell them not to be afraid, for he had good news for them and for all the world. Let the class tell you some good news that has come to them. The news the shepherds brought was the best that ever came to this world. Tell how this angel and a host of others joined in praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Teach this verse to the children.

The shepherds' visit to Jesus. The shepherds were at once interested in the message just brought to them and they believed it, hence they went to find the child Jesus. The news was too good for them to keep and they told it all around. Tell the children how to find Jesus now. All who seek him earnestly find him. We come to him, turning away from our sins, and give ourselves to him. He lets us know that he saves us and gives us great joy in our hearts. The shepherds told others when they had found Jesus, and those who find Jesus now are desirous of telling others the good news. The shepherds praised God when they found Jesus.

LESSON XIII

HOME READINGS. Mon., Dec. 20.—Elijah in Naboth's vineyard.—1 Kings 21:11-20. Tu.—Elisha heals Naaman the Syrian.—2 Kings 5:1-14. Wed.—The boy Joash crowned king.—2 Kings 11:1-12. Th.—Daniel in the king's court.—Dan. 1:8-20. Fr.—Amos the fearless prophet.—Amos 5:1-15. Sat.—Jehovah yearns over backsliding Israel.—Hosea 11:1-11. Su.—Jehovah's gracious promises to Israel.—Hosea 14.

Jehovah's Gracious Promises to Israel—Review.—Hosea 14: 1-9.

[A reading lesson only.]

SUPT.—1 O Is'ra-el, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

School.—2 Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.

3 Assh'ur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

5 I will be as the dew unto Is'ra-el: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Leb'a-non.

6 His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Leb'a-non.

7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Leb'a-non.

8 E'phra-im shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.

9 Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

SUPT.—What is the GOLDEN TEXT? **School.—The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. Psa. 103:8.**

PRACTICAL TRUTH.—**The Lord is waiting to receive all who come to him.**

TOPIC.—**Character sketches.**

INTRODUCTION.—We trace in this quarter the history of the kingdoms of Israel from the time of Elijah to the time of the fall and captivity of Israel in B. C. 721. The kingdom of Judah had seasons of fearful departure from God and occasional seasons of penitence and returning to the Lord, but the kingdom of Israel steadily sank lower and lower through their rebellion against God until they were taken into captivity and were destroyed as a nation.

SUMMARY.—Lesson I. Topic: A climax reached. Places: Samaria, the capital of Israel; Jezreel, one of Ahab's dwelling-places. Naboth had a beautiful vineyard close to one of King Ahab's palaces, and the king wished to buy it. Naboth refused to sell it because it was his ancestral inheritance. Jezebel, Ahab's wife, wickedly plotted against Naboth and had him slain. Ahab took the vineyard. Elijah met him and reproved him, telling him that he and his wife would be slain.

II. Topic: Perseverance rewarded. Places: Gilgal; Bethel; Jericho; the Jordan; a place east of the Jordan. Elijah's work was nearly done. Elisha had been appointed his successor, and knew that Elijah was to be taken away from earth. He asked that a double portion of Elijah's spirit might rest upon him. This petition was granted on the condition that Elisha should see Elijah when he should be taken away. Elisha would not leave him, and he saw him taken up by a whirlwind.

III. Topic: The divine Healer. Places: Damascus; Samaria; the Jordan. Naaman was the commander of the Syrian army and an able man, ut he was a leper. Through the words of a Hebrew captive he learned that he might be healed in Israel. He went to the king of Israel who could do nothing for him. He came to Elisha's home and because the prophet simply sent word to him to bathe seven times in the Jordan, he was angry and refused to follow his directions. Later he dipped in the river and was healed. Gehazi, Elisha's servant, was stricken with leprosy for getting a present from Naaman under false pretenses.

IV. Topic: Elisha's body-guard. Places: Dothan; Samaria. Elisha told the king of Israel of the movements of the Syrian army, which was attacking Israel. The king of Syria learned where Elisha was and sent an army to capture him. The army was smitten with blindness and he led them into Samaria and treated them generously.

V. Topic: Revolution in Judah. Place: Jerusalem. Athaliah usurped the throne of Judah and occupied it for several years. Joash, whose life had been saved when Athaliah sought to kill him, was the rightful heir to the throne. When Joash was seven years old the people rose up and deposed and killed Athaliah and made Joash king. The worship of the true God was restored.

VI. Topic: Foundation reform. Place: Jerusalem. Jehoiada, the priest, was counselor to Joash and under his guidance the young king ruled well. He undertook to repair the temple. At first he did not succeed because those who were to collect money failed to secure enough. He took a chest and placed it in the temple that the people might put their offerings in it. This plan succeeded and the temple was repaired.

VII. Topic: Youthful integrity. Place: Babylon. Daniel and his three companions were Jewish captives in Babylon, and the king desired them to be placed in training to become his trusted servants. They desired not to eat the food that came from the king's table and to be allowed to eat the simple food to which they were accustomed. They would not drink wine, but chose water. The test showed that they were superior to the youths who ate the king's food and drank his wine.

VIII. Topic: Jonah's mission. Places: Israel; Nineveh. Jonah was a prophet of Israel whom the Lord called to go to Nineveh to preach to the people. He tried to run away from duty, but later went as the Lord commanded. He preached what the Lord gave him for the people, and they repented. The Lord spared the city.

Jonah was displeased at God's mercy, but God gave him needed instruction in the lesson of the gourd and the worm.

IX. Topic: God's message to Israel. Places: Tekoa; Bethel. God called Amos to be a prophet to Israel. Amos lamented over the sin and desolation of his nation. He called upon the people to seek the Lord. His rebuke to them called forth their hatred. He gave them encouragement that they would live if they would seek him. The great mercy of God is strongly set forth in the prophet's message.

X. Topic: Ungoverned ambition. Place: Jerusalem. Uzziah commenced to reign at the age of sixteen years. At first he was godly and prospered. Later his heart became proud and he ventured to do the duty of a priest contrary to God's commands and became leprous. He never recovered. His course and punishment are a striking warning against pride and worldly ambition. His early goodness did not relieve him from the result of wrong conduct.

XI. Topic: Israel's history. Place: Kingdom of Israel. The Lord gave his prophet Hosea a message to Israel. The Lord greatly loved his people and dealt tenderly with them. They turned from him and with great kindness he called upon them to return to him. He would still have mercy upon them.

XII. Topic: A world message. Place: Bethlehem. While Joseph and Mary were at Bethlehem to be enrolled, Christ was born. An angel told the news to shepherds in the fields at night and the heavenly host praised God. The shepherds went to Bethlehem and found Jesus. They rejoiced and told the news to many others. The example of the shepherds has been followed by the long line of those who have found the Savior.

TABULAR VIEW

NO.	SUBJECTS	GOLDEN TEXTS	PRACTICAL TRUTHS	OUTLINES
I.	Elijah in Naboth's Vineyard. 1 Kings 21: 1-29.	Be sure your sin will find you out. Num. 32: 23.	The sin of covetousness is attended by many other sins.	I. The plot against Naboth. II. Naboth murdered. III. Elijah's message to Ahab.
II.	Elijah Taken up into Heaven. 2 Kings 2: 1-12.	In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Psa. 16: 11.	The Lord calls his servants home when their work on earth is done.	I. Elijah called to depart. II. Elisha's request. III. Elijah taken to heaven.
III.	Elisha Heals Naaman the Syrian. 2 Kings 5: 1-27.	I am the Lord that healeth thee. Exod. 15: 26.	Those who are humble and trustful are blessed.	I. Naaman's leprosy. II. A remedy proposed. III. The leprosy cured. IV. Gehazi's sin.
IV.	Elisha's Heavenly Defenders. 2 Kings 6: 8-23.	The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Psa. 34: 7.	The Lord is the defense of his people.	I. Elisha defending Israel. II. Elisha sought. III. Elisha protected. IV. An army captured.
V.	The Boy Joash Crowned King. 2 Kings 11: 1-20.	The house of the wicked shall be overthrown: but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish. Prov. 14: 11.	God blesses and honors those who honor him.	I. Joash preserved. II. Joash made king. III. Athaliah slain. IV. True worship restored.
VI.	Joash Repairs the Temple. 2 Kings 11: 21–12: 16.	God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. 9: 7.	God's work demands our best efforts.	I. The reign of Joash. II. A fruitless effort to repair the temple. III. Generous offerings. IV. God's house repaired.
VII.	Daniel in the King's Court—World's Temperance Sunday. Dan. 1: 1-21.	Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 1 Cor. 16: 13.	There are rewards for those who stand by right principles.	I. Hebrew youths under training. II. Daniel's purpose. III. Standing the test. IV. The Hebrews honored.
VIII.	Jonah a Missionary to Nineveh — Foreign Missionary Lesson. Jonah 3: 1-4: 11.	Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Matt. 28: 19, 20.	We who have the gospel are under obligation to give it to those who are without it.	I. Jonah's mission. II. A penitent people. III. The prophet instructed.
IX.	Amos the Fearless Prophet — Home Missionary Lesson. Amos 5: 1-15.	He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. Jer. 23: 28.	The Lord sends warnings to those who forsake him.	I. A lamentation for Israel. II. An exhortation to seek God. III. The prophet hated. IV. Hope extended.
X.	Uzziah's Pride and Punishment. 2 Chron. 26: 1-23.	A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. Prov. 29: 23.	Pride is unlovely and ruinous.	I. Uzziah, a king of Judah. II. His successes. III. His pride. IV. His punishment.
XI.	Jehovah Yearns over Backsliding Israel. Hosea 11: 1-11.	I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love. Hosea 11: 4.	The Lord seeks to win those who have forsaken him.	I. God's tenderness toward Israel. II. Judgments upon Israel. III. Mercy promised.
XII.	The Song of the Angels — Christmas Lesson. Luke 2: 1-20.	The angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Luke 2: 10.	The gospel is as good news now as ever in the past.	I. Christ born in Bethlehem. II. The announcement of his birth. III. The shepherds' visit to the child Jesus.

A Teaching Plan

I. INTRODUCTORY.—1. The time covered by the events studied during the quarter is about one hundred seventy-five years. 2. The middle portion of this period, while Jeroboam II was in power, was a time of material prosperity in Israel. 3. Jehovah's attitude toward Israel. 4. The desperate state of those who reject God.

II. THEME.—God's love for Judah and Israel.

III. KINGS APPOINTED.—1. We have three kings whose history we study this quarter. 2. Ahab. (1) His character. (2) God's messages to him. (3) His death. 3. Joash. (1) His ancestry. (2) His preservation from death. (3) Made king. (4) His adviser was Jehoiada. (5) The character of Joash. (6) His work in repairing the temple. 4. Uzziah. (1) His success in the early part of his reign. (2) His pride and its consequences.

IV. PROPHETS RAISED UP.—1. Elijah reproving Ahab. 2. Elijah's departure from earth and Elisha appointed as his successor. 3. Elisha and Naaman, the Syrian. 4. Elisha and the Syrian army. 5. Elijah and Elisha compared. 6. Jonah's experience as a foreign missionary. 7. Amos, the home missionary. 8. God's message by Hosea to backsliding Israel. 9. The prophet Daniel as a teacher of temperance.

V. THE FALL OF ISRAEL.—1. The kingdom of Israel came into existence through a revolt. 2. Not one good king ever sat upon the throne. 3. A nation given over to idolatry. 4. Warned by prophets. 5. Hoshea the last king. 6. The nation taken into captivity by the Assyrians in B. C. 721. 7. The kingdom of Judah continued until B. C. 588.

Practical Survey

TOPIC.—**Character sketches.**

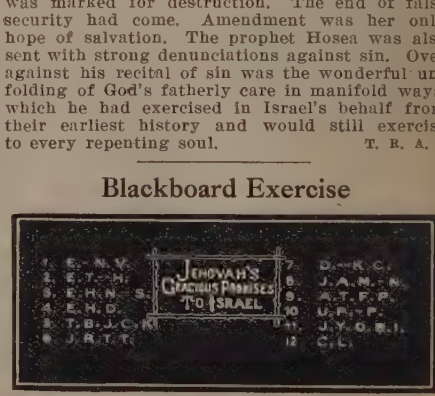
I. Of individual piety.
II. Of national proclivities.

I. Of individual piety. The lessons of this quarter deal with individuals and nations in a way to reveal the power of godliness and the power of ungodliness. Through single individuals God caused nations to recognize his sovereign power, his love and mercy, his justice and judgments. The opening lesson presents Elijah in his characteristic office as judge, where he pronounced the doom of Ahab's family, which is recorded in this quarter's study. In this event God vindicated the cause of the innocent and proclaimed his purpose to uphold the nation. The proving of Elisha's fitness to succeed Elijah was seen in his devotion to the cause of God and his earnest desire for personal piety. The Hebrew captive maid stands out in history as one whose faith and charity made her God's instrument in introducing Israel's prophet to Syria, a contending and heathen nation, in the healing of Naaman, who became a worshiper of the true God. To impress the Syrians still further with his willingness to show mercy, and to lead them to acknowledge and worship the true God, Elisha was enabled to frustrate all Benhadad's efforts to subdue Israel and finally to prove God's mercy when Elisha refused to allow the Syrian army to suffer death, and they were led by him to Samaria in their blindness. In preserving the life of his prophet God thus overcame the evil designs of Syria against his people Israel. In the complete carrying out of the destruction of Ahab's family it seemed that the family of David was destined to become extinct. The hatred of Jezebel lived in her descendant, Athaliah, whose natural affection was far less than her ambition to sit on the throne of Judah. All her cruelty and bloodshed could not prevent the fulfilment of God's promise to David. Through Jehosheba, of royal blood, and Jehoiada, the priest, the infant Joash, of the family of David, was spared and reared in the temple until of proper age to be declared king of Judah. The piety of those foster-parents was so fervent and enduring, that by studious effort there was brought to pass an almost bloodless revolution. Athaliah, the usurper of the throne, was called upon to see her place occupied by its rightful king, and the family of David continued upon the throne and the worship of Jehovah reestablished and Baal-worship overthrown. Foundational reform was the mission and work of Joash by the support of the godly Jehoiada. The repairing of the temple, the destruction of Baal-worship and the recovery of national interests marked the presence and power of God in behalf of his vacillating people. When at last the day of captivity came to Judah, God had in the youthful Daniel and his companions the remnant which should perpetuate his church amid the luxury and heathenism of Babylon. The youthful integrity of Daniel was based upon his true piety and loyalty to religious convictions. As a reward for his steadfastness he was blessed in body and soul and given a place of influence which enabled him to declare the power of his God to the heathen world around him. In the character of Jonah God's mercy and love shine forth in making him a missionary to a heathen people whom God sought to redeem from sin and its punishment. Obedience on Jonah's part brought corresponding sincerity in repentance and reform in Nineveh. In the person of Uzziah was portrayed the prosperity of half a century under God's guidance and blessing. Personal and national piety marked the larger part of his reign. When he seemed to have reached the summit of success, he met the temptation which overcame him in his desire to add to his temporal power and ecclesiastical authority.

II. Of national proclivities. In the days of declension from God, the tender, compassionate and yearning prophet Amos, was sent to Israel to define their situation and declare God's call for them to return to righteousness. Their many-sided and deep corruption was made plain. Israel had fallen. Her glory had departed. She was marked for destruction. The end of false security had come. Amendment was her only hope of salvation. The prophet Hosea was also sent with strong denunciations against sin. Over against his recital of sin was the wonderful unfolding of God's fatherly care in manifold ways, which he had exercised in Israel's behalf from their earliest history and would still exercise to every repenting soul.

T. R. A.

Blackboard Exercise



Practical Applications

The promise of mercy. "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God" (Hosea 14:1). Bianconi, the introducer of the car system in Ireland, on leaving his home in Italy, found his most trying leave-taking in separating from his mother. She fainted as he left her. Her last words were words which he never forgot, "When you remember me, think of me as waiting at this window watching for your return." If we have departed from God, we may think of him in the same way, for he is ever watching and waiting for our return. He waited for the return of the antediluvians (1 Pet. 3:20). All the day of the prophetic dispensation God spread out his hands to his rebellious people (Isa. 65:2). Truly, "His mercy endureth forever."

The promise of restoration. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him" (Hosea 14:4). David was healed, Peter was healed, thousands of backsliders have been healed, and the promise still holds good. The physician who has proved himself skilful in healing hundreds of a certain disease, inspires confidence in all who may be afflicted with the same, that they may be healed. Why not be as sensible with Christ, who is so anxious to heal all who need?

The promise of the Spirit. "I will be as the dew unto Israel" (Hosea 14:5). The dreary, desert wastes are not all included in the Sahara. There are barren souls which are as dry and dead as any desert can be. But there need be no moistureless souls, for God will be the dew to every one. In Palestine the dew falls so heavily in places that it takes the place of rain. And as it comes unseen, silently, gently, it is a beautiful figure of the work of the Holy Spirit. Just as the dew revives the drooping vegetation and causes it to grow abundantly, so the Holy Spirit will renew the dead soul and make it to bring forth and blossom abundantly.

The promise of fruitage. 1. The lily mark. The poet expresses it in the following beautiful lines:

"O star on the breast of the river,
O marvel of gloom and grace,
Did you fall right down from heaven,
Out of the sweetest place?
You are white as the thoughts of an angel,
Your heart is steeped in the sun;
Did you grow in the golden city,
My pure and radiant one?

"Nay, nay, I fell not out of heaven;
None gave my saintly white,
It slowly grew from the darkness,
Down in the dreary night.
From the ooze of the silent river
I won my glory and grace;
White souls fall not, O my poet;
They rise to the sweetest place."

But they rise because of the power within, and this power in a dead soul is that that comes from the Author of life. 2. The Lebanon mark. It is supposed the taller a tree grows, the deeper the roots sink into the soil. So as the cedars of Lebanon stand for strength, God will give his people strength to stand through all the storms. 3. The shadow mark. "His branches shall spread." Have you spiritual fruitage enough that some one else can find restoration and protection with you? G. W. G.

Hints to Primary Teachers

Central Thought.—The Lord loves his children and is working for their good.

BLACKBOARD OUTLINE

Prophets { Elijah—I, II; Elisha—III, IV; Jonah—VIII; Amos—IX; Hosea—XI; Daniel—VII
Kings { Joash—V, VI; Uzziah—X
The birth of Christ—XII

The review. This exercise gives an opportunity to each member of the class to relate some story that has been studied during the quarter. As these stories are called for one by one, a picture illustrating the story may be shown to add to the interest.

Stories of six prophets. We had several stories about Elijah in the lessons of the preceding quarter. These may simply be named. The story of Elijah and Naboth is a sad one because of Ahab's wickedness and the punishment that came to him and Jezebel. Elijah went to heaven without dying. He was caught up by a whirlwind and was seen no more, although the prophets looked for him carefully. Refer to the transfiguration scene, noting the fact that Elijah was there with Moses and Jesus. In connection with the story of the healing of Naaman, call attention to the good work the captive Hebrew girl was able to do. The story of Elisha's safety when he was sought by a whole army shows how God cares for his own people. In the story of Jonah the truth of the blessings of obedience and the consequences of disobedience may be profitably contrasted. Give a picture of Amos reproving Israel for their sins. God gave Hosea a tender message for Israel who had wickedly departed from the ways of the Lord. The story of Daniel is one of the most interesting in the Bible. It meant much for him and his three young companions to take their stand for what was right in the heathen country where they were captives. Show how manly they were and how manly and noble it is to refuse strong drink and other harmful things.

Stories of two kings. A boy seven years old among us does not generally hold a very high position. Note the steps by which Joash came to be king of Judah. The Lord planned his preservation and opened the way for him to be crowned. He had a great work for him to do in repairing the temple and in restoring true worship in Jerusalem. Do not omit the story of the chest with the hole bored in the top to receive the offerings of the people. Uzziah presents a striking warning against pride. Note that his pride led to his violation of God's law and to his being severely punished. Tell something about the leprosy.

The story of Christ's birth. Picture to the children a hillside in Palestine on which flocks of sheep were lying quietly, being watched by shepherds. It was night, and suddenly an angel came to them and told them that in Bethlehem Jesus was born. They were startled at this message, and were more amazed at the chorus of angelic voices which told of peace and good-will to men.

Aa'ron. Elder brother of Moses. He was consecrated to the priesthood (Exod. 28). His sons succeeded him.

Ab'a-na. A river of Damascus, which Naaman considered better than the Jordan (2 Kings 5:12).

A-bed'-ne-go. The Chaldean name given to Azariah, one of the three friends and fellow captives of Daniel in Babylon (Dan. 1:7).

A-bel-me-ho'lah. A place in the Jordan valley, the home of Elisha (1 Kings 19:16).

A-bi'a-thar. A high priest in the time of David. He was the son of Ahimelech. He was deprived of his office by Solomon.

A'bi-e-zer. The eldest son of Gilead and the head of a family in the tribe of Manasseh. The descendants of Abi-ezer were called Abi-ezrites.

Ab'i-gail. One of David's wives. She was the widow of Nabal.

A-bin'a-dab. 1. A Levite of Kirjath-jearim. 2. The second son of Jesse. 3. A son of Saul.

A-bin'o-am. The father of Barak, who with Deborah judged Israel.

Ab'i-shag. A Shunammite maiden who became a member of David's household.

Ab'i-shai. A nephew of David and a brother of Joab. He was one of David's mighty men.

Ab'ner. The son of Ner. He became a friend and supporter of David.

Ab'sa-lom. Only son of David by Maacah (2 Sam. 3:3). He won over the people and succeeded in seizing the government. Absalom's army was defeated by David's warriors and Absalom was slain by Joab.

Ad'mah. One of the cities of the plain near Sodom.

Ad-o-ni'jah. One of the sons of David. He aspired to the throne and openly revolted and claimed the crown while David was yet alive. The news of this revolt being brought to the king, David caused Solomon to be crowned as his successor at once.

A-dor'am. Receiver of tribute under David, Solomon and Rehoboam.

A'hab. One of the most evil of Israel's kings. His wife was Jezebel, a heathen woman, who influenced him strongly toward idolatry.

A-ha-zi'ah. A king of Judah, the father of Joash.

A-hi'ah, A-hi'jah. A priest in Shiloh.

A-him'e-lech. A high priest at Nob, slain by order of Saul.

A-hi'o. Son of Abinadab, who accompanied the ark when it was brought out of his father's house (2 Sam. 6:3, 4; 1 Chron. 13:7).

A-hi'tub. Grandson of Eli.

Ai'ja-lon. A place fourteen miles west of Jerusalem.

Am'a-lek, A-mal'ek-ites. A nation inhabiting a region south of Palestine. Amalekites resisted Israel's march toward Canaan.

Am-a-zi'ah. Son of Joash and king of Judah.

Am'mon-ites. Children of Ammon. Their country lay east of the Dead Sea.

Am'o-rites. A race of mountaineers that, at the time of Israel's conquest of Canaan, occupied territory on both sides of the Jordan.

A'nath. The father of Shamgar (Judg. 3:31).

A'phek. A place northwest of Jerusalem where the Philistines encamped before defeating the Israelites at Ebenezer.

A'sa. He was the third king of Judah after Solomon. He reigned forty-one years at Jerusalem. He restored the pure worship of God. He was emphatically a reformer.

Ash'dod. A city in Philistia.

Ash'ta-roth. The plural of Ashtareth, the principal female deity of the Phenicians.

As-syr'i-ans. Inhabitants of Assyria, an ancient empire on the Tigris River. Its capital was Nineveh.

Ath-a-li'ah. Daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. She was chosen as the wife of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. Her influence drew into idolatry and crime both her husband and her son Ahaziah. After their premature deaths she usurped the throne, and sought to secure herself by the murder of all the seed royal. Only Joash, her grandson, then an infant, was saved by his aunt Jehosheba. Six years afterward he was brought from his place of refuge and crowned by the faithful high priest, Jehoiada, who at the same time caused Athaliah to be put to death.

Az-a-ri'ah, or Uz-zi'ah. The ninth king of Judah. The first part of his reign was prosperous and happy but afterward, presuming to offer incense in the temple, he was smitten with leprosy.

Ba'al. An idol of the Phenicians whose worship was introduced among the Hebrews. The plural, Baalim, signifies images or statues of Baal.

Ba'al-e. A name for Kirjath-jearim.

Bab'y-lon. Babylonia was properly the province, including parts of Chaldea, of which the great and magnificent city of Babylon was the capital.

Bar'ak. A military man who was associated with Deborah in the judgeship of Israel.

Bath'-she-ba. Wife of David and mother of Solomon.

Beer-she'ba. An ancient place in the southern part of Palestine.

Be'li-al. A vile, worthless person (1 Kings 21:13).

Bel-te-shaz'zar. Name given to Daniel by Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:7).

Be-nai'ah. Son of Jehoiada, a chief priest (1 Chron. 27:5), and commander of David's bodyguard.

Ben-ha'dad. 1. King of Syria, B. C. 950; called Ben-hadad I (1 Kings 15:18). 2. Ben hadad II, son and successor of the former (1 Kings 20:1). 3. Ben-hadad III, son and successor of Hazael. He was defeated by King Joash (2 Kings 13:3-24).

Ben'ja-min. The youngest son of Jacob, and the name of one of the tribes of Israel.

Beth'-el, house of God. It was the residence of "the sons of the prophets" and priests (2 Kings 2:2, 3).

Beth'le-hem. The birthplace of our Lord. It is a town about six miles south of Jerusalem. Bethlehem-judah was a town within the territory of Judah.

Beth-shit'tah. The place where Gideon stopped his pursuit of the Philistines.

Bo'zez. A sharp rock near the place where Jonathan and his armor-bearer defeated the Philistines.

Cæ'sar. The name of several Roman emperors. Cæsar Augustus reigned at the time of Christ's birth.

Car'mel. A celebrated range of hills, twelve miles long, running northwest beside the plain

of Esdraelon. Mount Carmel is the only great promontory upon the coast of Palestine. It is memorable as the scene of the destruction of the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18).

Car'mel-ite. An inhabitant of Carmel.

Cher'e-thites. A portion of David's bodyguard, always mentioned with the Pelethites (2 Sam. 8:18; 15:18; 20:7; 1 Chron. 18:17).

Che'rith. A small brook flowing into the Jordan, where Elijah was fed by ravens.

Cy-re'ni-us. Roman governor of Syria in Christ's time.

Cy'rus. The founder of the Persian empire. He liberated the captive Jews according to prophecies uttered centuries before.

Da-mas'cus. The chief city of Syria, and is still in existence. It stands on the Barada River, about one hundred forty miles northeast of Jerusalem.

Dan. 1. A son of Jacob. 2. A city originally called Laish, at the northern extremity of Israel. It was one of the seats of calf-worship instituted by Jeroboam.

Dan'iel. Fourth of the greater prophets; carried captive to Babylon, B. C. 604, and named Belteshazzar; made a governor under Darius. He maintained his integrity in the most difficult circumstances.

Da'vid. The second king of Israel. No character in Jewish history is more prominent than David. He excelled as a ruler, as a warrior and as a writer.

Deb'o-rah. A prophetess and judge of Israel.

Do'than. The place where Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites, and the Syrians were smitten with blindness. It was on the caravan route from Syria to Egypt, about fifteen miles north of Shechem.

Eb-en-e'zer. Stone of help. A place a few miles north of Jerusalem.

E'gypt. The seat of an ancient and powerful nation in the northeastern part of Africa. It was the place of the enslavement of the Hebrews.

Ek'ron. One of the five chief cities of the Philistines.

E'li. A descendant of Aaron and high priest of Israel. He was a judge in Israel forty years.

E-li'ab. The eldest son of Jesse.

E-li'jah. The renowned prophet. "He is described as long-haired and tall, roughly robed (2 Kings 1:8), with a sheepskin girdle and mantle. In appearance and spirit he was a type of the true Hebrew seer." His parentage is unknown. He appeared suddenly, was bold and fearless, and at last was taken to heaven without tasting death.

E-li'sha. The pupil and successor of Elijah.

E'phra-im. One of the sons of Joseph, and the name of one of the tribes of Israel.

Esh'ta-ol. A town in Dan.

Ga'ash. A hill in Ephraim, noted as being the burial-place of Joshua (Josh. 24:30).

Gal'i-lee. The northern part of Palestine and of considerable importance in the time of Christ.

Gath. One of the principal cities of the Philistines.

Ge-ha'zi. The servant of Elisha who fraudulently obtained a present from Naaman the Syrian. He became a leper.

Gen'tiles. Nations. From the Jewish standpoint all were Gentiles who were not Jews.

Gib'e-ah. A city of Benjamin, and the birthplace and home of King Saul.

Gib'e-on. A place a few miles north of Jerusalem where the tabernacle was set up.

Gid'e-on. A warrior of Manasseh who judged Israel forty years.

Gi'hon. A pool near Jerusalem. The location is disputed.

Gil'e-ad. A mountainous region lying to the east of the Jordan, about sixty miles long and twenty miles wide.

Gil'gal. A town in Ephraim, north of Bethel, where a school of the prophets was maintained in Elijah's time.

Go-li'ath, exile. A giant of Gath who was slain by David. His height was "six cubits and a span," which, taking the cubit at twenty-one inches, would make him ten and one half feet high.

Han-a-ni'ah. 1. A captain under King Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:11). 2. The Hebrew name of Shadrach (Dan. 1:7).

Har'od. A spring near Jezreel (Judges 7:1).

Ha-ro'sheth. A city of Naphtali.

Ha-za'el. A king of Syria. He was a servant of King Ben-hadad, whom he slew, and seized the throne.

He'ber. The husband of Jael, the woman who slew Sisera. He was a Kenite (Judges 4:17).

He'brews. The word is generally derived from "eber," one who passes over, and is applied to Abraham as having passed over the Euphrates from his native country. The name was applied to the Israelites mostly by foreigners, but sometimes by themselves.

He'bron. An ancient city of Palestine, situated eighteen miles south of the site of Jerusalem. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob dwelt there. It was called Kirjath-arba and also Mamre.

Hit'tites. Descendants of Heth. They were inhabitants of Canaan, occupying Hebron and its vicinity as early as when Abraham dwelt there.

Ho'bab. The brother-in-law of Moses.

Hoph'ni. Son of Eli. He was slain in battle.

Hor'eb. The name applied to the mountainous region of the Sinaitic peninsula, and particularly that part where the law was given.

I'cha-bod. Son of Phinehas (1 Sam. 4:19-22; 14:3).

I'saac. The son of Abraham and Sarah, born in their old age. He lived a peaceful life and died at the age of one hundred eighty years.

I-sai'ah, Jehovah's salvation. The son of Amoz, one of the most distinguished of the Hebrew prophets. He seems to have lived and prophesied wholly at Jerusalem.

Is'ra-el. The name given to Jacob at Peniel. The Hebrew nation was called Israel before the division of the kingdom. The name later was applied to the ten seceding tribes.

It'ta-i. One of David's supporters.

Ja-besh-gil'e-ad. The chief city in the half-tribe of Manasseh east of the Jordan. The men of this city rescued the dead bodies of Saul and his sons.

Ja'bin. A king of Hazor defeated by Barak.

Ja'cob. A son of Isaac and Rebekah. He deceived his father in obtaining the blessing of the first-born and incurred the anger of Esau, his brother, from whom he fled to his kinsmen in Padan-aram. He returned many years later and the brothers became reconciled. He spent his last years in Egypt, where provision was made for him and his family. See Israel.

Ja'el. Wife of Heber. She slew Sisera.

Je-ho'ash. See Joash.

Je-hoi'a-da. High priest in Judah. He was the counselor of King Joash.

Je-hosh'e-ba. Daughter of King Joram and wife of Jehoiada the high priest. She saved the life of the child Joash when Athaliah sought to slay him.

Je'hu. The son of Hanani; a prophet, sent with messages from God to Baasha, king of Israel, and thirty years afterward to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

Jer'i-cho. A rich and strong city in the Jordan valley. In Elijah's time a school of the prophets was located here.

Jer-o-bo'am. 1. The first king of Israel after its separation from Judah. He was an Ephraimite, the son of Nebat and Zeruah. 2. The thirteenth king of Israel.

Jer-ub-ba'al. A name given to Gideon (Judges 6:32).

Je-ru'sa-lem. The chief city of the Holy Land, and to the Christian the most illustrious in the world. The most ancient name of the city was Salem (Gen. 14:18), and it afterward was called Jebus (Judges 19:10, 11). Several other names were given it. Ariel (Isa. 29:1); the city of the great King (Psa. 48:2); the Holy City (Neh. 11:1; Matt. 4:5; Rev. 11:2).

Jes'se. Son of Obed and father of David. He had eight sons, and resided at Bethlehem.

Jez'e-bel. The daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre and Zidon, and the wicked wife of Ahab, king of Israel.

Jez'reel-ite. An inhabitant of Jezreel, a town in the tribe of Issachar, where Ahab had his royal residence.

Jo'ab. The chief officer in David's army.

Jo'ash. The son of Ahaziah. Athaliah, his grandmother, attempted to slay all the children of Ahaziah, in order that she herself might reign over Judah. Joash was rescued and became king of Judah at the age of seven years.

Jo'nah. The son of Amittai. He was commissioned to preach to the Ninevites. He tried to run away from his duty, but was led to obey God's command with the result that the city was spared.

Jon'a-than, the gift of Jehovah. The eldest of the four sons of Saul (1 Chron. 8:33), and one of the loveliest characters in Old Testament history. He loved David as his own soul. He fell in battle with his father and two brothers.

Jor'dan, Descender. The chief river of Canaan, running from north to south and dividing the land into two parts, of which the larger lay on the west.

Jo'seph. Son of Jacob and Rachel. When Joseph was about seventeen years of age he gave offense to his brethren; and was cruelly sold by them to a company of Ishmaelites, who carried him into Egypt.

Josh'u-a. The son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, the assistant and successor of Moses. The name means savior or salvation and an earlier form was Hoshea. The New Testament form is Jesus. He led Israel into Canaan.

Ju'dah. The name of one of the tribes of Israel. The name of the southern kingdom after the secession of the ten tribes.

Ju-de'a. A Roman province comprising the southern part of Palestine.

Ke-desh-naph'ta-li. A city of Naphtali (Judges 4:6). It was one of the cities of refuge.

Ke'nites. A tribe of Midian that became associated with the Israelites (Num. 24:21, 22; Judges 4:11).

Ki'shon. A river of northern Palestine flowing westward by Mount Carmel into the sea.

Lap'i-doth. The husband of Deborah.

Le'vi. One of the sons of Jacob. The Levites became the priestly tribe of Israel.

Ma-nas'seh. The son of Hezekiah and his successor on the throne of Judah.

Ma-no'ah. The father of Samson.

Mar'y. 1. The mother of Jesus. 2. Mary Magdalene. A follower of Jesus. She visited the tomb where Christ was laid (John 20:1).

Mel'zar. A steward or teacher (Dan. 1:11, 16).

Me'shach. The Chaldean name of Mishael.

Mi'chal. Saul's daughter whom he gave to David as his wife, and later took her from him.

Mich'mash. The place where Jonathan and his armor-bearer routed the Philistines.

Mid'i-an. The fourth son of Abraham and Keturah. The Midianites were the descendants of Midian, and dwelt in Arabia.

Mig'ron. A town a short distance north of Jerusalem.

Mi'sha-el. A Hebrew captive in Babylon, one of Daniel's companions.

Miz'peh. A city a few miles north of Jerusalem.

Mo'reh. A hill near Jezreel.

Mo'ses. The illustrious prophet and legislator of the Hebrews, who led them from Egypt to the promised land. He was born about 1571 B. C.; was the son of Amram and Jochebed, of the Kohathite branch of the tribe of Levi, and was the younger brother of Miriam and Aaron. His history is divided into three parts of forty years each. The first period extended from his infancy to his flight to Midian. The second period extended from his flight until his return to Egypt. The third period extended from his exodus from Egypt to his death on Mount Nebo.

Na'a-man. The general of Ben-hadad II, king of Damascene Syria. He was a leper, but was miraculously cured, on washing in Jordan seven times, according to the direction of Elisha.

Na'bal. A shepherd of Carmel who refused David food (1 Sam. 25).

Na'both. A resident of Jezreel whom Jezebel caused to be slain that Ahab might have his vineyard.

Na-o'mi. Wife of Elimelech, of Bethlehem. The family removed to Moab in time of famine, where her husband and her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, died, leaving with her their widows, Orpah and Ruth. When Naomi returned to Bethlehem, Ruth returned with her, but Orpah remained in Moab.

Na'hash. A king of Ammon.

Nai'oth. Samuel's home and school in Ramah.

Na'than. The prophet who instructed and reproved David.

Naz'a-reth. A city of Galilee, sixty-five miles north of Jerusalem. It was the home of our Lord during the first thirty years of his life. He visited it during his public ministry, but did not perform many miracles there because of the unbelief of the people. The modern town is a thriving village of 18,000 inhabitants.

Ne'bat. The father of Jeroboam.

Neb-u-chad-nez'zar. The son and successor of Nabopolassar, who was the first to reign over Chaldea after the downfall of Assyria. Nebuchadrezzar is another form of the name.

Nim'shi. The father of Jehu, king of Israel (1 Kings 19:16).

Nin'e-veh. The capital of Assyria on the Tigris River. It was a city of great size and vast wealth. Jonah preached there and the people repented.

Nun. The father of Joshua.

O-ba-di'ah. An officer in the court of King Ahab. He feared God. He hid a hundred of the Lord's prophets to save them from Ahab.

O-bed-e'dom. A Levite, called a Gittite, whose prosperity while keeper of the ark after the dreadful death of Uzzah encouraged David to carry it up to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:12; 1 Chron. 15:25).

O'ded. The father of Azariah, the prophet that encouraged King Asa (2 Chron. 15).

Oph'rah. The native town of Gideon (Judges 6:11, 24).

O-ri'on. The name of a constellation, or group of stars.

Or'pah. A Moabitess, daughter-in-law of Naomi.

Pel'e-thites. Couriers. Life-guards of King David (1 Kings 1:38, 44).

Pen'u-el. The word means face of God. It was the place east of the Jordan, by the brook Jabbok, where Jacob wrestled with the angel.

Phar'par. A river of Syria near Damascus to which Naaman referred (2 Kings 5:12).

Phil'is-tines. A powerful nation dwelling southwest of Canaan, with whom the people of Israel had frequent conflicts.

Phin'e-has. One of the sons of Eli. He was wicked. He was slain in battle by the Philistines.

Ra'chel. The favorite wife of Jacob. She was the mother of Joseph and Benjamin. Her tomb is a few miles south of Jerusalem.

Ra'mah. The birthplace of Samuel. It is a short distance north of Jerusalem.

Re-ho-bo'am. The son and successor of Solomon. At his succession the ten tribes revolted and formed the kingdom of Israel.

Rim'mon. A heathen deity worshiped at Damascus (2 Kings 5:18).

Ruth. A Moabitess, daughter-in-law of Naomi, who persisted in going with Naomi to live in Canaan. See Naomi.

Sa-mar'i-a. A city about thirty miles north of Jerusalem, built on a beautiful eminence. It was founded by Omri.

Sam'son. The son of Manoah, of the tribe of Dan. He was a deliverer and a judge of the southwestern tribes of the Hebrews for twenty years. From infancy he was a Nazarite, and was the strongest of men.

Sam'u-el. Asked of God (1 Sam. 1:20). A child given to Hannah in answer to prayer. He was brought up under the care of Eli, the high priest. He began to receive communications from God even in his childhood. After the death of Eli he became judge of Israel.

Saul. A Benjamite, son of Kish. He was the first king of Israel and reigned forty years. He and his sons were slain in battle at Mount Gilboa.

Sen'eh. One of the sharp rocks near where Jonathan and his armor-bearer defeated the Philistines.

Sha'drach. The Chaldean name given to Hananiah (Dan. 1:7).

Sham'mah. The third son of Jesse.

Sha'phat. The father of the prophet Elisha.

She'ba. A country, probably in Arabia on the Red Sea. The queen of Sheba visited King Solomon to hear his wisdom and see his greatness.

She'chem. Sometimes Sichem. A city in the central part of Palestine. Here Abraham built his first altar in Canaan. Jacob also built an altar at Shechem. It was situated in the mountains of Ephraim, between Ebal and Gerizim.

Shem-ai'ah. A prophet in the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:22). A name common among the Jews.

Shu-nam'mite. An inhabitant of Shunem (1 Kings 1:3).

Shi'loh. A city in Ephraim between Bethel and Shechem.

Shi'lo-nite. An inhabitant of Shiloh.

Sim'e-on. One of the sons of Jacob. The allotment to the tribe of Simeon lay in the south of Canaan.

Sis'e-ra. The commander of King Jabin's forces when attacked and defeated by Barak. He was slain by Jael (Judges 4:21).

Sol'o-mon. The son of David and third king of Israel. He was prosperous, but countenanced idolatry. He reigned forty years. He built the first temple in Jerusalem.

Sur. One of the ancient gates of Jerusalem, whose location is not known.

Syr'i-a. A large district of Asia, lying between the Mediterranean, Mount Taurus and the Tigris.

Tab'bath. The place where the defeated Midianites stopped after Gideon's night attack (Judges 7:22).

Ta'bor. A mountain to the north of the plain of Esdraelon.

Tar'shish. The place, whose location is not definitely known, to which Jonah attempted to flee when directed to preach to the Ninevites. Some think it was in Spain.

Tim-nath-he'res. A town situated in the mountains of Ephraim. It was Joshua's residence and the place where he was buried. Called also Timnath-serah.

Tish'bite. A designation given to Elijah. It is thought he was a native of Thisbe in Naphtali.

U-ri'ah. A Hittite and a commander of a portion of David's army. David planned his death because he wanted his wife Bath-sheba for himself.

Uz'zah. One of the attendants when the ark of the covenant was taken from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. He was slain by the Lord for touching the ark.

Uz-zi'ah. See Azariah.

Za-a-na'im. The place where Sisera sought refuge in Heber's tent, when defeated by Barak.

Za'dok. A high priest in the time of David. He was the son of Ahitub.

Zar'e-phath. A Phenician seaport. Called by the Greeks Sarepta. Elijah lived here during a part of the famine.

Ze-bo'im. One of the cities of the plain destroyed with Sodom.

Ze-bu'lun. One of the sons of Jacob. The allotment to the tribe of Zebulun was in the northern part of Canaan including most of the plain of Esdraelon.

Zer'e-rath. A region probably in the Jordan valley (Judges 7:22).

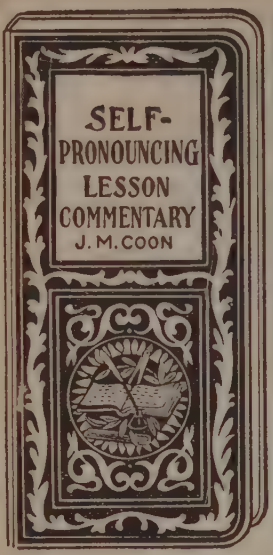
Zer-u-i'ah. David's sister and the mother of three leaders in David's army.

Zi'don. An ancient and wealthy city of Phenicia on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

Zi'on. One of the hills upon which Jerusalem was built. It came to be a name applied to the city itself.

Ziph. A town in the mountains of Judah. David hid in the wilderness of Ziph from Saul. The inhabitants of Ziph are called Ziphites.

Zo'rah. A town in Judah. It was where Manoah lived and where his son Samson was buried.



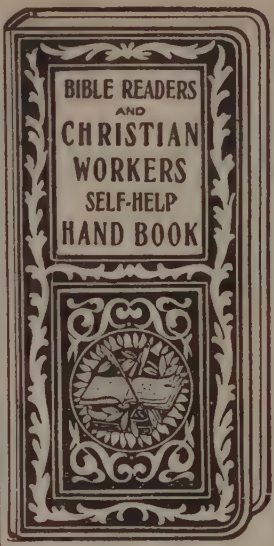
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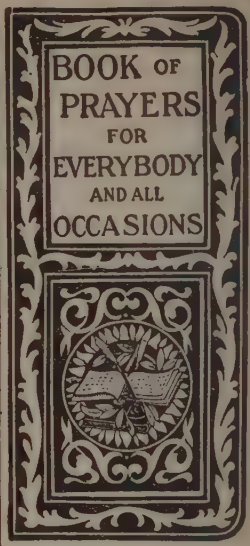
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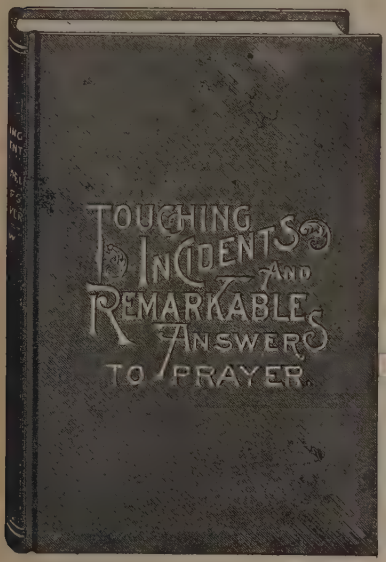
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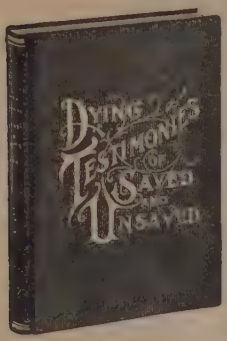
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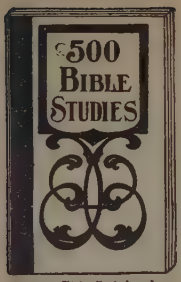
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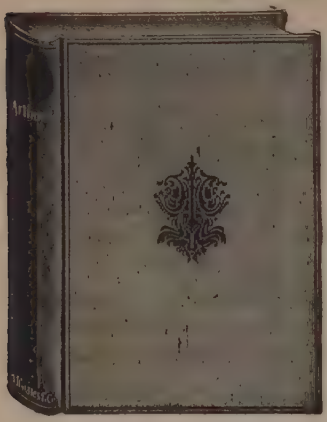
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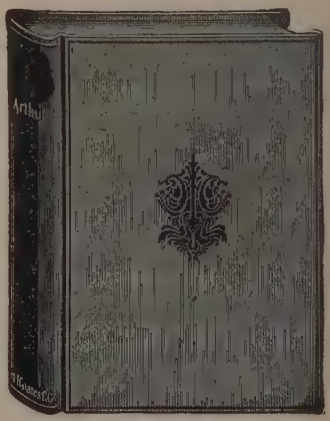
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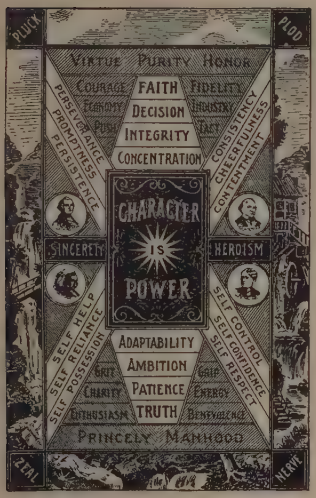
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